

THE  
ARTICLES OF RELIGION  
AS AMENDED, SUPPLEMENTED  
AND EXPLAINED

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W. S. HARRISON



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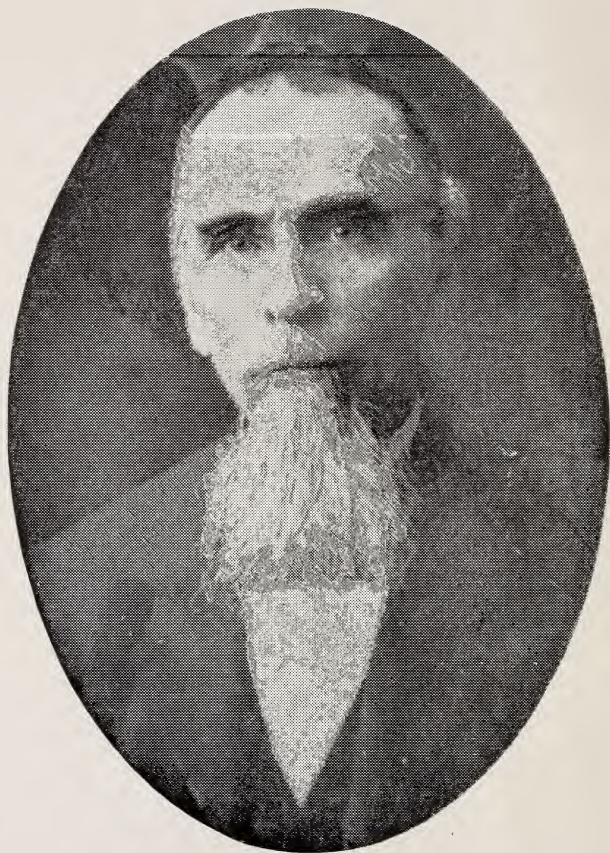
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Yours Truly,  
W. L. Harrison

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ARTICLES OF RELIGION  
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AND EXPLAINED

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BY

W. S. HARRISON

*Author of "Sam Williams, a Tale of the Old  
South," and some minor publications*

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W. F. R. J. 6. 14

**To**

**The members of my Sunday School Bible Class, in Stark-  
ville, Miss., including our faithful Pastor, Rev. T.**

**H. Lipscomb, B.D., this little book is  
affectionately inscribed by**

**THE AUTHOR.**



## INTRODUCTORY.

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RECENT discussions have emphasized anew the fact that our Articles of Religion are not complete. On some of our most distinctive tenets, as Christian Perfection, Witness of the Spirit, and Inspiration, we have no articles; while some of the Articles are wanting in fullness of expression. All my ministerial life I have felt the want of some succinct, but sufficiently full, statement of our creed which I could place in the hands of serious inquirers with the statement that "Here are the doctrines which Methodists believe, with some of the reasons why they believe them." I have here tried to supply just such a statement of doctrine.

A full and correct statement of belief is of great importance to any denomination. Those Churches which have no articles of religion, and flout all such as man-made creeds, are subject to all manner of divisions and wild speculations. With just a few points of agreement, there are endless variations in different communities, if not rival Churches in the same community. The Bible being the only creed, each pastor or evangelist makes his own interpretation, often noth-



ing more than an exaltation of his own idiosyncrasy, around which warped interpretations of Scripture are made to twine. He secures a following, and the result is a new shade of belief. The faith of the denomination ultimately resembles Joseph's coat of many colors.

Think of a professor of philosophy trying for a position in one of our colleges, at the same time saying: "I repudiate all textbooks. These all are man-made; nature is my only textbook." He would at once be dismissed as a crank. Time was when men who sailed the seas had to depend upon nature at first hand as a guide in steering their course. That is no reason why compass and charts should now be thrown aside. It must be plain to most people that the Church of to-day needs the very best statement of its tenets that can be made.

Of course everybody knows that the creed is not a substitute for the Bible. It is an aid, a guide in the study of the Scriptures, just as a textbook is a guide in the study of nature. The Book is the ultimate authority in religious truth, just as nature is the final source of information concerning her secrets. The utility, not to say necessity, of a complete statement of the articles of faith must be too obvious for doubt.

The divisions in doctrinal belief among our Methodist people are mainly on those very sub-

jects where we have no articles. Thrown back on our standard authors as authority, there is ample room for divergence. Soon different schools of thought are formed, and there is danger of the different wings of our army fighting each other.

Our creed should be a full and clear statement of every important doctrine of our Methodism. Our Articles of Religion should be altogether consistent and harmonious, no clashing of creed against creed. Then they should be in perfect harmony with the plain teaching of the entire Scriptures. In fact, each Article should be a clear reflection of all the rays of truth from the Bible on that special subject. Such a creed, thus agreeing with itself and with all the Scriptures, will in truth be in accord with the universal experience of mankind. It will appeal to the normal intellect, the sound reason, and the spiritual intuitions of the race. It will tend to organize the thought, the piety, and the aspirations of the entire Church.

To complete the statement of our essential doctrines, I have added some Articles—to wit: The Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Spiritual State of Infants, Regeneration, Witness of the Spirit, Christian Perfection, the Entire Efficiency of Christianity to Meet All Social Problems, etc. These Articles, we believe, complete the circle of our essential beliefs, thus not in name only but in

fact making our Articles of Religion stand as our interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

But wherein we may have failed to express the belief of the Church others, no doubt better equipped, will correct the errors. This effort is put forth with the hope that it will aid in the formation of such a creed as the wisdom of the Church may finally adopt.

THE AUTHOR.

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## ARTICLE I.

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### GOD.

"THERE is but one living and true God, everlasting, the one eternal Spirit, without body or parts, unlimited in space, of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible."



## GOD.

WE cannot overestimate the importance of this first Article of Religion. A right conception of the nature and character of God is the key to all theological knowledge. That there is but one God is the most plainly taught doctrine of the Bible; and this is fully accepted by all Christians. He is the "one eternal Spirit." It seems right, therefore, to insert this clause. Even in point of duration, he can have no equal, no rivals. All other spirits, like all other things, are derived from this one eternal Spirit.

The words "everlasting" and "eternal" are often used to express endless future duration of things which had a beginning; as of the souls of men and the eternal life we hope to enjoy. But in the strict sense "eternal" means all the past and all the future. Such is the existence of the Supreme Being. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God."

Note also that this clause defines the very essence, the true nature, of Deity: "God is a Spirit." So Jesus taught. Surely no definition is complete without this specification.

The Article says, "without body or parts," and I complete the conception by adding, "unlimited

in space." We must insist that God really and truly fills all space. This is abundantly taught in the Book. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" The plain meaning of the text is that it is impossible to find even in imagination a place where God is not.

Our minds, limited and weak, are prone to take refuge in the idea of form, or some semblance of organism, in the effort to get a concept of God. To many he is a gigantic man, whose presence somehow fills the universe.

But organism is essentially limited. This is the necessity of finite beings. But God is a pure Spirit, unlimited, without organism, all-knowing; knowing equally in all places; equally powerful in every inch of space; equal to every emergency in the universe in each moment of time. God everywhere and everywhere God. Consequently he may be worshiped in prayer by billions of people at the same instant; and he is as truly present with each individual as if the two were absolutely alone.

There is a constant tendency in human thinking to minimize the thought of God by confining him to some mental image. This infirmity of the mind is age-long. The almost universal practice of idolatry among primitive races and the continu-

ance of the practice among many nations even to the present day evince the strength of this tendency.

We should by strong mental effort brush away every limiting boundary and try to rise to the unlimited vision worthy of the infinite God. Try to conceive of his inconceivable greatness. He is great enough to be the cause of all other being, to crowd unlimited space with innumerable worlds of life and grandeur; but so great that no amount of creation could add anything to him; so essentially, inherently great that he could not in the least be diminished were all created things remanded back to naught. Therefore he is the one, only one, uncreated, underived, and imperishable Being.

“The Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible.” This satisfies the sane mind. A personal God, all-wise, with infinite power, is the sufficient cause of all other existence. This conception of the Source of things is reasonable. Development can only bring out resources already existing. Evolution can only evolve inherent possibilities. Nothing can be evolved which did not already exist. No power less than God can evolve something out of nothing.

No amount of time, with endless combinations of favoring conditions, could ever evolve inert

dead matter into life, much less into intellect. Intellect does not in any form exist in dust, and dust cannot evolve that which it did not contain. But the universe is here. It never could of itself have come from absolute nothingness, and yet this absolute nothingness must be the starting point of any theory which rejects God. How can nothingness evolve anything?

Our minds are so constituted that we must believe that always something has existed. Then either inert matter or constructive mind must have priority of existence. This brings us in the last analysis to the two primary schools of thought, the material and the spiritual.

But we fail to see in matter any reason for the conclusion that it is the original existence. Reduce matter to its elements, as iron, sulphur, oxygen, and the rest. These elements evidently have no power whatever of self-production. They are inert and dead. That they could of themselves have come into existence seems utterly absurd.

But passing over the absurdity of self-origin, how could these elements have made and sustained the present order of things? The inherent laws of nature, we are told, are sufficient for all the outcome. Then the laws of nature must have the constructing force and guiding wisdom which makes them nothing less than God. Under another name we would have the same God.

It is freely admitted that these laws are the instruments of God in bringing about the present results. But that these laws, blind as fate, should move harmoniously of themselves to sublime ideals is a marvelous conception. Yet this is what many seem to believe. This is a giant faith, and, like most giants, is deficient in mental acumen.

How is a new world to be started? Why, we are told that out in space there are immense voids or vacant places destitute of worlds. These voids are so extensive that rays of light would be ages passing through them. Such a void, surrounded by great star clusters like our galaxy, becomes the pooling place of star dust.

From many causes fine particles are thrown off from the surface of worlds. At a certain degree of fineness these particles cease to be affected by the law of gravitation. Then they are caught by another law, the law of radiation, operating in the opposite direction from the law of gravitation. This law of radiation drives the fine dust out into the void space, where it becomes the nucleus of the new world.

This star dust in the course of ages becomes a huge mass of materials, as our earth was when it was without form and waste. This, we are told, is the way that worlds or systems of worlds grow. As the old worlds wear out, the new worlds grow. Thus endlessly the activities of the universe go



on. Now, in order for a great nebulous mass of materials to become a world of life and beauty, it must either have in itself the potency of a finished world or be in connection with resources from which everything necessary for the finished product may be drawn.

Far be it from me to discount the universal reign of law. But laws, however perfect, cannot manifest an intelligence which they do not possess. The intelligence makes the perfect laws. The beautiful order which prevails in the heavens, the perfect accuracy in the revolutions of the planets, the exact inclination of the earth to the plane of the ecliptic, which assures the ever-returning seasons of seedtime and harvest, and many other evidences of designing wisdom, if not true, make nature false to reason.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." This accords with the world's best reason. The unperverted reason reads the sign manual of the eternal God written in plain letters on all the face of nature. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. i. 20.)

But, passing over the impossibility of self-producing worlds, let us inquire how life is to get started in the new worlds forming out in space.

The spontaneous origin of life is out of the question. Life from life is the universal law.

Of course the new worlds begin in the cold of space; just how cold is a matter of conjecture, but surely by a hundred degrees too cold for the existence of any form of life. This same cold of space prevails all round the new world, so that no life could possibly come from other worlds. Unless this new development is in contact with life on the outside, no life could ever be developed. That was the case with our world and with all worlds. Thus life is impossible in any world unless that world is in contact with God.

There is truly in nature a tendency to order, to health, to normal conditions. In each productive movement there is an ideal suggestive of designing wisdom. This ideal is often ages in advance of the movement seen by us. Thus nature in many of her phases is working to ends far out of sight in the future. To God, and to him only, the end is known from the beginning. In ways beyond our power to mention Nature is forever proclaiming in Reason's ear this greatest truth: "The Hand that made us is divine."



*ARTICLE II.*

---

THE TRINITY.

“In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”



## THE TRINITY.

THE doctrine of the Trinity is confessedly mysterious. It is strictly a matter of revelation, as it probably lies beyond all human investigation. It may be given, but it is not contrary to, our reason. In fact, it should be no surprise to find in the revelation of God something to which we ourselves are analogous. Each man is a trinity, having body, mind, and soul. These departments of our nature are distinct, and may be treated separately. Yet they are vitally united; together they constitute the man.

There is a strong tendency among materialistic thinkers to reduce God to a single force, a blind energy, working to what end no one can tell. But the Bible reveals God as a living, conscious, working Personality, guiding the destinies of universal being to an end worthy of God.

To find that God, the great eternal Spirit, is complex in the constituency of his Being, variety of personal activity in absolute unity, is calculated to strengthen our faith in the great verities of religion, because to such Pattern we find nature so largely conformed. God is thus revealed as the prototype reflected in all nature. As already observed, man is a trinity, a threefold unity. Even

the mind itself is threefold—reason, sensibility, and will, constituting the mind. In our great luminary we have the globe, the light, and the heat; these make the sun. So we might proceed almost endlessly. Ours is a universe of trinities. Therefore the conclusion comes with the clearness of conviction that all things are the offspring of a Trinity.

It only remains to quote a few of the proof texts which establish this Biblical tenet: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." (1 John v. 7.) This text, so explicitly stating the doctrine, is not well sustained by ancient Greek manuscripts and is left out of Westcott and Hort's Greek Testament and also out of the Revised Version published by the American Bible Society. This does not necessarily prove that the text is spurious, for we do not know what future investigations may disclose.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) In this familiar benediction we have an act of apostolic worship in which prayer is offered to each of the three persons of the Godhead. St. Paul was evidently a trinitarian.

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus



accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 3.) In this passage the three persons of the Trinity are clearly brought to view. No man speaking by the Holy Spirit, by the authority or inspiration of the Holy Spirit, can call Jesus accursed or condemn him as being less than what he claims to be—the Son of God. And no man can say that Jesus is the Lord unless he speaks according to the mind of the Holy Spirit.

"And now the Lord God, and the Spirit, hath sent me." In this commission of Isaiah two persons of the Godhead are revealed. We know that the Son, or Word, also was there, because St. John tells us: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the Christ of God, the Redeemer of men.

We should not let our conception of the Trinity mar in any sense our conception of the essential unity of God. The word "person," though the best we have for the purpose, is apt to mislead, because we ordinarily attach to it the idea of distinct and separate individuality. That is not the meaning in our Article. The three persons in the Godhead are not separate individualities. They do not act independently of each other.

The Son by his death redeemed the world. But that was not an act apart from the Father and the

Spirit. True, the human body only could die ; but the whole divinity suffered. Redemption was the act of God. We are born of the Spirit, cleansed by the Spirit. It is said also that we are born of God. "If children, then heirs of God," not heirs of the Holy Spirit separately. Thus all the works of Deity, whether by the Father, the Son, or by the Spirit, are works of the one God. We must, therefore, eliminate from the word "person" the conception of separate individuality.

The popular conception of God the Father standing grim and wrathful with the drawn sword of justice, ready, seemingly anxious, to cut the sinner down, while God the Son pleads for mercy, is misleading. This view may result from the overworking of such passages as this: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." The word translated "advocate" is *παράκλητος*, a comforter or helper. The same word is used to describe the relation of the Holy Spirit to all the children of God, their Helper.

Let us, then, read the sentence anew: "If any man sin, we have a Comforter, a Helper, a Sympathizer with the Father, helping the fallen one to repent and regain faith." *With* the Father, possibly in conjunction with the Father ; for it is God himself yearning over the wayward son, trying to win him back to obedience and safety.

God is one and can never be divided in action.

We may have a clearer view of this by again referring to man. We have here the physical man, the intellectual man, and the moral man. Action may spring from either of these, yet not one of them completes an action without the concurrence of the other two. Sometimes one and sometimes another is foremost in the movement, but man as a unit performs the action. Here, then, is variety in unity in all the acts of life. In a sense thus there are three persons in one manhood.

Why should not something like this, though infinitely more perfect, prevail in the divine nature? No doubt while there may be more variety, there is closer unity in the divine nature than in the human.

Man is often at variance with himself. The moral man goes into sin over the protests of the intellectual man. But the intellectual man, though protesting, nevertheless yields and follows, not blindly, but with feeble resistance, into ruin. Through ambition the intellectual man drives the physical man into such excesses that there is a breakdown in mid-life.

The Divine Being is infinitely wiser. Perfect harmony prevails in all his works. The nearer man can approach to this perfection, the better, and the better will be his life. It should be his aim to attain a perfect balance of all his powers. Excess in the intellectual man is apt to make the

neurasthenic or the maniac. Undue bias given to the moral man tends to make the fanatic, and the physical man may put on muscle at the expense of the intellectual and moral man.

Thus we are very like and very unlike God. God is one in nature, triune in functional activity. This shows him to be the Prototype as well as the Maker of nature. All nature bears, however faintly, the image of her Creator. Even the inanimate forms of matter, however small, still have substance, form, and function. Thus we see the Trinity stamped on every fiber of being.

### ARTICLE III.

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## THE SON OF GOD, THE CHRIST.

"THE Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures—that is to say, the Godhead and manhood—were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to make reconciliation for us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men. \*The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone."

---

\*Translated from the Twentieth Article.



## THE SON OF GOD, THE CHRIST.

REDEMPTION is clearly set forth in this Article. The atonement is God's interposition in behalf of man for the best interests of the race. It is God's answer to moral conditions on earth. When the first man by disobedience broke his primal relation with God, he became a sinner. He forfeited original righteousness. He was away from God. Here the work of redemption took effect; it was the only way of return. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh [the law was powerless because of man's sinful nature], God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [as a sin offering], condemned sin in the flesh [conquered sin in its own stronghold, the sinful nature of man]: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 3.) Thus in consequence of the atonement the requirements of the law can be met by us, if we live not by the promptings of our sinful nature, but are led by the enlightening Word and the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

Consider the nature of the atonement.

First, it is sacrificial. "And he is the propi-



tiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.)

But this principle of vicarious suffering has been objected to as wholly unjust. Among equals before the law the objection might hold good. But this is not a case in point. The divinity of Christ lifts him far above human comparisons. As God he was the Source of law, above all law; and if he chose as a volunteer to come under the law, to which as God he was not subject, and to suffer vicariously for man, no principle of right or justice was violated. His coming into human conditions was altogether voluntary; his death on the cross was not less so. "I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." (John x. 17, 18.) This sacrificial offering meets every demand of law and right, so that God may "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 26.)

Secondly, the atonement is remedial. It means healing for the sin-sick souls of men. The evil done by sin must be undone by grace. Man must be restored and spiritually born again. He needs new life, moral health, spiritual growth, mental saneness; and here is the remedy.

Thirdly, the atonement is progressive. This



has been too generally overlooked. To be brought back to God with new life, with vigorous spiritual health and intellectual sanity, is glorious, aye, a glorious stepping-stone to things still more glorious, a superior grade of soul, a finely grained manhood, a divinely finished character. These without atoning grace we could never have; but "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Man, cleansed and polished by divine grace, under the dispensation of suffering may attain spiritual fiber far superior to what might have been secured under the reign of original righteousness. The world's chief good and best civilization are provided for in the redeeming sacrifice of Christ.

The atonement is the most important event in the history of the race. It emphasizes anew the fact that man bears the image of his Maker. It also brings into closer light the Fatherhood of God and the consequent beneficence of universal providence. Here also we see the tie which binds mankind into a brotherhood more sacred even than that of the one blood of which we are all made. Therefore, as we should naturally expect, it has above all other events given trend to the life and civilization of the world.

We should not, therefore, be surprised to find that ancient history converged to this event and that modern history has radiated from it. Such

an event would naturally be the attracting center of world-wide movements. Necessarily this event stands alone in the grandeur of its importance; it could happen only once in the history of the world. To see, then, that all the streams of history are affected by it is just what should be expected.

Jewish life and national character were instinct with the issues of the atonement. Their sacrificial services, their Messianic prophecies, and the consequent expectant attitude of their vivid faith prepared an expectant people for the coming of Christ. Here we find the spiritual environment in which the manhood of the Christ reached atoning perfection.

The spiritual preparation which was to round out the "fullness of time" for the great advent is not to be looked for among the Pharisaic rulers of the Church, but rather in the living faith of the common people, and was manifest in such characters as Zacharias and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, and Simeon and Anna. These give unmistakable evidence of a type of piety, the purest the world had ever known.

Such characters as Andrew, Peter, James, John, and Nathanael up by the lake of Galilee indicate a wide extension of this excellent grade of religion. When the wicked rule, either in Church or State, the best people mourn; but they are not

all drawn from their integrity. Even in the decadent days of Ahab, when from Elijah's point of view it seemed that all had gone astray, God assured him that seven thousand remained true. So it was when Jesus came. There were vast multitudes of the common people ready to hear him gladly.

This was no sudden outbreak of piety, but is what might reasonably have been expected from the rich flow of prophecy and admonition which God had given to the Jewish people. It had been a long time since the people had had an open vision of prophecy; therefore the stream of piety which survived among the lowly had been time-tried and fire-tested. The time demanded people of giant faith, and truly there were giants in those days.

The age-long movement which finally produced John the Baptist might certainly be counted on to bring forth a woman fit to be the mother of the long-expected Messiah. Thus the spiritual element in the preparation of the world for Christ was furnished by the Jews.

The Greeks supplied the language. The Grecian people excelled in mental activity. In some of the finer qualities of mind they have had no superiors. Their poets, historians, and orators, by their excellent mental endowments, brought their language to a degree of perfection never

before attained by any tongue. It was undoubtedly the best vehicle of thought then in the world.

By the world-wide conquest of the Greeks, as well as by the fine quality of the language itself, this tongue became well-nigh universal just in time to become the mental instrument in the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ. What a blessing that the literature of the New Testament was given to the world in the Greek language, a language so elevated, so refined, and so capable of expressing every shade of thought! Even with this tongue the sacred writers sometimes labored with the excessive weight of thought. Surely there was no other language in which such a message could have been so well given to man. We are all, like Paul, debtors to the Greeks.

Thus the most highly endowed men among the most enlightened people labored unconsciously to prepare a language suitable for the Messiah's use.

Then the Romans, succeeding to universal empire, with a better genius for law than had been shown by any other people, had prepared a vast arena for the spread of the new spiritual empire.

Thus the world was prepared for the coming of its Divine Teacher. It was the "fullness of time." In no previous age had there been anything like such a combination of favoring conditions. Jewish prophecy had raised the general

expectancy of the coming of the Desire of all nations. Grecian language was prepared to convey its teachings over the world. Roman law restrained the bloodthirstiness of the petty kingdoms to such an extent that the new kingdom could not be crushed in its infancy.

Then it was a time of universal peace. The temple of Janus was closed, the nations had rest, the clamor of war was hushed, that the Prince of Peace might catch the ear and heart of the world! Thus by a combination of age-long movements, conspiring and uniting with the precision of a divinely directed plan, the world was ready for its Christ.

Since his coming the history of the world has largely been a history of Christian civilization. Undoubtedly the teaching of Christ has given trend to the controlling thought of the world, and that influence in human thought was never stronger than it is to-day. Thus we clearly see that the progressive power of the atonement is, and always has been, the controlling influence in the vast social movements throughout the world.



#### *ARTICLE IV.*

---

### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

“CHRIST did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man’s nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all men at the last day.”





## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

THE doctrine of the resurrection of Christ is of the first importance. The fact of his resurrection is the crowning proof of his divine nature and the pledge of the final resurrection of all the human race. It is the keystone in the mighty arch of truth contained in the New Testament. Coming down as a prophecy from the Old Testament, often foretold by Christ himself, the circumstances attending it are minutely given by each of the evangelists, each from his own viewpoint. Then the Acts of the Apostles is a history of the thought as it affected the lives and teachings of all the principal witnesses in the very earliest period of the infant Church. It is the leading thought in all the Epistles and is the triumphant note in the Apocalypse. In short, this great truth is so much the web and woof of the New Testament that faith in that Book as an inspired message could not survive a discount of the fact of the resurrection of Jesus.

Finally, St. Paul makes a partial summing up of the evidence as it was clear to all in his day: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he

was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." (1 Cor. xv. 3-8.)

No fact in history is better attested, by documentary evidence. Then the vitality which this great truth has given to the gospel is an age-long witness, and Christendom is to-day the great monumental evidence of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

*ARTICLE V.*

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THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"THE Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."



## THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I SAY Holy Spirit instead of Holy Ghost. The word "ghost" does not in the popular mind in this age stand for God. Rather it is associated with the superstition of our forefathers. It is suggestive of a visitant from the tombs lurking around the homes of the timid. The word is also suggestive of limitation and bodily form, and is, therefore, inadequate to express the true idea of God. Spirit is the better word. And even with its use it is hard to get the mind to take in the idea of an infinite God absolutely unbounded by time or space.

Mrs. Valcore Randolph Bonnell gathered a class of children in the factory district to give them a lesson in religious knowledge. The first lesson was about God. She earnestly endeavored to impress upon their minds that God is a Spirit. The next day, when the class came together, a review was first in order. "Now, children, what is God?" There was silence. Finally a little girl answered timidly: "God is a ha'nt." In her mind "spirit" and "haunt" were identical. Some such mental image comes up in most minds when the word "ghost" is used. No doubt "ghost" is better than "ha'nt," but we should no longer use a

term which tends to minify God in the popular conception.

True, the word has a place in our sacred classics, especially in hymnology, and will so abide. Many people still have reverent emotions connected with its use. We would not for a moment disturb such tender regard. The word seems to be exactly in place in the grand old doxology, where it so fittingly rhymes with all the heavenly host:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

By all means let the word stand in this place, and let generations yet to come still sing with the unction which the stanza suggests. But the word is no longer in general use. It belongs to a past age, and there is no good reason why the church service should not in its terminology be up-to-date.

All the texts and arguments used to establish the doctrine of the Trinity, of course, serve to establish the divine personality of the Holy Spirit. Without repeating these arguments or going at length into a discussion of the subject, we may say in a word that the name, the works, and the character of God are in the Scriptures applied to

the Holy Spirit. Therefore, according to these Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is God.

The Holy Spirit is the great Executive in the work of saving the world. This much is implied in the farewell address of Jesus to his disciples: "I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John xvi. 7-11.)

Here is indicated a permanent change of personality in the executive work of salvation. This religion with a greater power of spirituality was now to assert universal dominion. In this it was simply coming to its own. From the beginning it had the promise of blessing to all men. "In thee [Abraham] shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The Messianic prophecies always took a world-wide scope.

Jesus was all the time conscious that he was completing a world religion. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xii. 32.) "This," says the evangelist, "he said signifying what death he should

die." It also signifies that Jesus was entirely conscious of the wonderful influence this death was to have on the destinies of all men.

"It was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you." This form of speech was repeated again and again. He was purposely pushing the fundamental principles to their source and fixing responsibility in the thought, where it really belongs. He was fulfilling, or completing, the law. All the distinctive principles which he taught were of universal application. He thought in world-wide conceptions and taught in terms comprehending all mankind.

In perfect consistency with the all-comprehending thought of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit concerns the whole world. "He shall reprove the world of sin." The word translated "reprove" is a grammatical form of ἐλέγχω (*elegcho*), "to prove, demonstrate, convince." The work of the Spirit is to convince the world of sin. This has in part been done. The world everywhere recognizes the existence of sin. Some few have tried to refine sin into a disease of the body or a defect of the mind. But the self-condemnatory sentence of the great majority is: "We are guilty." "Because they believe not on me." That men did not recognize and receive virtue when it was so plainly concreted among them



shows the terrible prevalence and deep-seated malignity of sin.

“Of righteousness.” This also has been accomplished or is in process of accomplishment. The world recognizes the existence and value of a high standard of religious life. See how quick the world is to point out the shortcomings of Church members. Even wicked men know very well what a Christian ought to be.

“Because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.” The resurrection of Jesus from the tomb and his ascension into heaven are the final links in the chain of evidence which forever establish the triumph of Christ and the consequent reign of righteousness. Then how logical: “The Spirit shall convince the world of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more”!

“And of judgment.” This demonstration easily follows the other two. The prevalence of sin where righteousness is possible necessarily demands the judgment. Men readily recognize this fact; and though they affect an outward boldness, yet in their secret consciousness they dread a scrutiny into their conduct.

“Because the prince of this world is judged,” or condemned. That means conquered. The evil genius, the spirit of the world, has been overcome. The decisive moral battle has been fought,

and righteousness has won. Therefore it is now and forever will be dominant. It has a moral right to exist, which sin has not. The forces of Providence work for righteousness. "All things work together for good to them that love God."

By the coming of the Holy Spirit after the departure of the Redeemer we are not to suppose that the Spirit had not always been in the world or that the Son was going to leave it. He says plainly that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." In the fullness of his nature God is always present. But necessarily the time before the coming of the Saviour was different in administration from that which succeeds this greatest of all events.

The age before the coming of Christ was prophetic. It was the Messianic age. Religion was directed forward to the coming One. Hope and joyous expectation clustered about the coming Messiah. Prophecy centered on him. The very forms of worship were adumbrative. The sacrifices pointed to the great Sacrifice.

But when the great work of redemption was done, a new age, the spiritual age of the world, had come. Types and shadows were lost in fulfillment. The Desire of all nations had come, and therefore the religion was henceforth to be for all men. "The Sun of Righteousness has

arisen with healing in his wings" for Gentiles as well as Jews. And now the Spirit, the new Executive, is to carry light and healing into all the world.

The Holy Spirit was the Source of the inspiration of the Scriptures. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. i. 21.) This same Spirit is the power which works in man to quicken faith, incite to repentance, and to effect regeneration, or the new birth. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of true Christians as the Divine Comforter and the Source of heavenly joy. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." This same great Comforter shall be our Teacher and the sure Interpreter of the sacred Word to earnest seekers after truth.

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father shall send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” “The Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say.”

Thus we see how vital is the relation which man sustains to God. All of us should be impressed with the fact that we are never absent from him. Our most secret sins are committed in the face of Jehovah. God strives with us against sin, sticking closer than a brother, still reproving and admonishing even after all earthly friends have given up in despair. From the lowest depths of sin, if we yield to him, he will lead us through the gloom of repentance to a joyous faith, to the glorious new birth, into the new world of righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit.

This persistence shows God's great love for human souls. He who “so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should . . . have eternal life,” will not fail to use all the influences of his providence that these redeemed souls may be saved. Where we see only stupidity, dullness, or hopeless

indifference, he sees the jewel which should sparkle in the diadem of heaven.

The divine estimate of the human soul thus manifest should startle us into a proper sense, each of his own soul. That in us which drew from heaven its most precious gift and sets in motion the resources of his providence to save should surely be our chief concern. And an honest concern for our souls will not be in vain. It accords with universal experience that whenever a man adjusts his finer spiritual ears to the voice of Heaven he never fails to receive the admonition and help which starts him toward right living and joyous experience. The Holy Spirit is the one universal Presence. Commune with this Spirit and you commune with all the best of mankind, because he who touches your heart touches all other hearts of like disposition. This is the communion of saints, which constitutes so large a part of the joy both of earth and heaven.



*ARTICLE VI.*

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THE INSPIRATION OF THE  
SCRIPTURES.

“THE inspiration by which the Holy Scriptures were written was an illumination by the Holy Spirit of the minds of the sacred writers, whereby they gave a full and inerrant revelation of all the truth necessary to our salvation.”





## THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

THE inspiration of the Scriptures is clearly taught in the Book. David thus expressed himself as to his own spiritual illumination: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. xxiii. 2.) Thus David was inspired or aided by the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself bore testimony to the fact that David was inspired, classing him with Moses and the prophets: "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." (Luke xxiv. 44.) This claim of David has been allowed by all in every age who believe in the divine origin of the Bible.

"The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved [*φερόμενοι, pheromenoi*; borne, surely upward into a clearer mental state] by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. i. 21.) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16.) The word *θεόπνευστος* (*theopneustos*), from *θεός* (*Theos*), God, *πνέω* (*pneo*), to breathe, is correctly translated inspiration, inbreathing, a breathing into. God, who originally breathed

into man the breath of life and he became a living soul, later breathed into the consciousness of some men and they became inspired teachers. These texts show that our Article gives the true definition, an illumination by the Holy Spirit of the minds of the inspired writers.

Mr. Beecher compared the inspiration of the Scriptures to a large island rising from the bosom of the deep. In this parable the surrounding water represents the unaided human intelligence. The different elevations of the land indicate the amount of inspiration necessary for writing the different parts of the Bible. Part of the island would be but little above the water level, little inspiration being required to record passing events and so to write the historical books. Much would be table-land, showing the writing to be far above the human level; while some of the most precious passages, revealing the very heart of God, would, like mountain peaks, pierce the very heavens with their supernal light. This, of course, is speculation, but it has the semblance of truth.

Revelation was made to human intelligence. Our reason must interpret. Reason is a precious gift of God, as much so as is revelation. Without the one we could not have the other. The Bible is so plain that any degree of intelligence can get from it truth enough for the conduct of

life and the salvation of the soul. At the same time it is so profound that the greatest minds through a long lifetime may gather its treasures without exhausting its meaning. The same Spirit who inspired the Word is our best Guide to its meaning. He will enlighten our minds if we invoke his aid. "We have an unction from the Holy One, and we know all things" necessary to our salvation and right living.



*ARTICLE VII.*

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THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES FOR SALVATION.

“HOLY Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. Those books of the Old and New Testaments, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.”



## THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES FOR SALVATION.

ALL the truths, principles, and rules necessary to salvation and right living might have been compressed into a very few chapters; but God did not see fit to give us our Bible in such abstract form. Instead, we have a large number of books, comprising most of the literature of ancient Israel. From the call of Abraham to the close of the New Testament canon is more than two thousand years. This was the long period of religious development and the revelation of divine truth. The high service of perfecting religion was confined almost exclusively to the Jews. They had a genius for religion, as the Greeks had for art and the Romans for law. This makes their history sacred, not because they were especially good, but because good for all the world came out of their struggles in their private and national life.

In a long national life they had wonderful and varied experiences. Their history, fraught with momentous issues, must always be of inestimable value to all the rest of the world, because they were the custodians of true religion.

The divinely given task was theirs to prove to

themselves and show to all the world the practical value of the principles of this religion. The light of truth grows with their growth; therefore their whole life has a religious significance. Religion was concreted in their history. Every commandment, every principle and rule of life, was put to actual trial in their varied experiences.

Here we study conscience-training and character-building in the daily actions of real, living people. The revelation is made plain, because we can see the very motives and springs of action. We see men in trying emergencies and awful crises, in grand successes and in dismal failures. We are continually reminded of the constant presence of God and the supremacy of his laws. The criterion of right is the line along which we see people struggling, now on one side, now on the other. The smile of approval ever rests on obedience; the frown of justice, on transgression.

Thus over and over the principles which make for righteousness are illustrated, till the way of life is so plain that the wayfaring men of every nation, however densely ignorant, need not err therein.

In the New Testament we see the same concrete teaching by living examples; the same blessing on right doing, the same curse on disobedience. Finally, the Great Teacher concreted the everlasting truth in his inimitable parables.



The parables of the prodigal son, the good Samaritan, and the vineyard, where the laborers "received every man a penny," are as truly illustrative of truth as if all the characters were really historical.

Thus the sacred history of more than two thousand years becomes a long chronological black-board on which we see the great Master working out the problems of destiny and demonstrating to all the world those principles which make for the supreme good of mankind. Thus the sufficiency of the Scriptures becomes more and more apparent as we study them in the making.

The supreme wisdom of giving us the Book in this form may be readily discerned. The great doctrines of the Bible are not dependent upon verbal accuracy or on isolated texts which human ingenuity might misconstrue. In the history of the chosen people we see the essential doctrines of religion concreted in actual human life.

1. The awful fact of sin. No one can read the Bible and not be impressed with the blight of sin. In this Book the human heart is laid bare. The motives and springs of action, evil as well as good, are plainly seen. We see all grades of people, with false pretenses, shallow excuses, and other vain disguises, going into all manner of sin. We see them taking the sweets of iniquity to their lascivious souls and smacking their guilty lips

with the false presumption that no one knows and God does not remember.

Over against this sin we constantly hear the thunder of God's eternal justice. Because of sin the ancient world was by the flood swept clear of all inhabitants save one family. Because of sin the prosperous cities of the plain were engulfed in the Dead Sea. Because of sin anguish, misery, and death have followed the steps of men in every walk of life. Even the very sanctuary of God became the scene of avenging justice, and homes, which should have been the abodes of peace and joy, became like dens of demons. The terrible nature of sin is manifest in the awful thunders of Sinai, and we feel its throb of anguish in the denunciatory burdens of prophecy. Thus the fact of sin is stamped on every page of the Bible. As we read this truthful Book we see that the blight of sin hangs menacingly fearful over all that is fair and lovely in human life.

2. Redemption. All Jewish life, from the days of Abraham to the ascension of Christ, is redolent with the hope and fact of redemption. All the innocent victims on Jewish altars slain point unmistakably to the great Sacrifice, the Lamb of God, for sinners slain. In the daily sacrifices in the temple the lesson of redemption was taught year after year and age after age, till the great work was accomplished on the cross.

3. Repentance. In the Scriptures we see repentance concentered in private lives and national history. In living men we see how sorrow, anguish, remorse follow sin. Thus we learn what repentance really means.

Jacob, in a way, was religious. He had faith in God. In his wonderful dream at Bethel God appeared and confirmed to him the covenant made with Abraham. But his religious life remained shallow. Not till his return, when he was about to face the brother he had wronged, did he see how much he lacked of being fully in accord with God. In that all-night wrestle in prayer with the Presence of God he experienced the repentance which broke thoroughly the fallow ground of his nature. He came out of that struggle a prince of God.

David was a man after God's own heart; not that he was without fault, nor that he was a perfect ruler, but because he had those qualities which God approves and men admire. But he sinned terribly, being guilty of seduction, betrayal of confidence, and murder as crime followed crime. When the child of his guilt was smitten with fatal disease, the enormity of his sins came to him. Then came the bitter repentance. See how his soul is racked with contrition, remorse, and self-loathing as he lies on the ground for seven days in fasting and prayer,

while the child's life hangs in the scale of uncertainty! Only men of great natures can repent after that manner. What a wonderful, Godlike sense of sin this repentance revealed! Out of the agony of repentance no doubt there came to him the qualities which enabled him to give to many of the songs of Zion a depth of tone which else would have been lacking.

Away with the shallow idea that repentance is a mere perfunctory duty to be performed once in a lifetime, when we are seeking religion! As we see repentance concreted in the lives of these two men, Jacob and David, we clearly perceive that it was for sins which festered in the ordinary religious life, where the thought of sin was too lightly regarded. In each case the nature was deepened and nobler character attained. We get an idea here of what true repentance means. Of course repentance is the first duty of a sinner who would turn from sin to God; but that does not exhaust the function of this important doctrine in connection with our efforts to climb to the higher heights of Christian life.

4. Faith. We see the nature and power of faith in the prominent characters all through the Book. Abraham was preëminent for the sublimity of his faith. In the severest tests he staggered not through unbelief, but honored God by a living faith that won for him the title "Friend

of God and Father of the Faithful." Beginning with Abel, Enoch, and Noah, before the flood, and coming down to the last of the apostles, we have a long list of heroes of faith whose lives hid with God have shown that the things invisible are the main concerns in earthly living. Faith thus concreted becomes the guide and support of faith in us.

5. The inner spiritual life, including regeneration and purity of life. The word "regeneration" does not occur in the Old Testament, and occurs only twice in the New. It may not in either place refer to the spiritual change known as the new birth. The Saviour gave us the best descriptive phrase, *γεννηθῆ ἀνωθεν*, *born from above*, and also the reason of its necessity: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." If the flesh were all, that one birth would be sufficient. The animal needs only one birth. Because we are spiritual and have capacity for a better life, we need the birth from above. We need a spiritual life, a life coalescent with the life of God.

Such a life we see manifested in a host too numerous to mention, such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Isaiah, the two Johns, Peter, and Paul. Here are men whose lives we know could not be the result of earthly motives. Their springs of action could neither originate nor terminate in mere earthly lives. We know that such

lives could not be lived without adequate spiritual forces to sustain them any more than *aëroplanes* could sail the air without propelling power. Thus we see how clearly and fully the essential truths of revelation have been concreted in human experience for our instruction and encouragement.

We see in the human life of the Son of God the truth not only concreted but incarnated in living activity in all the varying conditions of life. We see the eternal truth of God in human form, living, working, teaching, in the actual world of sin, sorrow, sickness, misery, and death—truth combating error, denouncing sin, and holding out the hope of eternal life to the sinner. Finally, we behold the Truth crucified on the Roman cross, but breaking the bands of death and coming forth to a new and glorious life, the antidote of sin, the Conqueror of the grave. And from this glorious first Christian Sabbath we see the Light of life radiating over all the world.



### *ARTICLE VIII.*

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## THE OLD TESTAMENT.

“THE Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as toucheth ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity to be received in any commonwealth, yet notwithstanding no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.”





## THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CERTAINLY the Old Testament is not contrary to the New; neither does the New depart from the teaching of the Old. They are companion parts of a whole. Neither is complete without the other.

“The New was in the Old contained,  
The Old is in the New explained.”

The Old Testament without the New is an unfulfilled prophecy. Without a personal Messiah, a suffering Redeemer, many of its plainest utterances are without meaning. Without the New Testament as an explanation and a fulfillment, the Old is an arrested development, an unfinished revelation, a magnificent work of divine proportions without completion. It is a promise of world-wide munificence broken off at the very point of expansion, a Godlike undertaking which failed at the crucial point.

The Old Testament is like a great tree which blossoms into full fruition in the New Testament. Without the New Testament it is like a tree blighted in the very budding time of fruition. The New Testament without the Old would be top-heavy, a development without sufficient prep-

aration. Such a wonderful growth must have its roots buried deep in the soil of humanity. Together these two wonderful Testaments make the full revelation of divine truth.

The completed Book is a treasury of all religious knowledge. It is the wellspring of divine wisdom, where the hungry intellect and the famishing heart of the world may be fed and be satisfied. When rightly understood, it presents to the mind the concentered system of truth which rings clear in every part. With the intellect illuminated and the heart cleansed by this truth, man is equipped for all of life's duties and ready for the untried realities beyond. It is, therefore, the palladium of true religion and the source of the world's best civilization.

*ARTICLE IX.*

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DEPRAVITY.

“DEPRAVITY, as the result of the original sin of Adam, is the corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.”



## DEPRAVITY.

THIS short Article, it is believed, expresses the truth contained in our seventh Article and leaves out that which is obscure. Depravity is truly defined in the phrase, "Far gone from original righteousness." By original righteousness is meant the ability of man, in and of himself, to do things pleasing and acceptable to God. This original ability is the main deprivation sustained by the fall.

Of his *own nature* man is inclined to evil, and that continually. This is a great truth, but not the whole truth, in regard to man's moral nature. Man is redeemed, and redeemed human nature has redeeming qualities. There is that in man to which an appeal for good may be made. But for this the gospel would be useless as a saving agency. According to universal experience and observation, man has inclinations to good as well as to evil.

Manifestly our moral nature is dual. We have strong tendencies in opposite directions. In each breast there is a warfare between good and evil. This accords with all experience and is fully sustained by revelation. Men rarely are wholly bad or perfectly good. Wicked men often have noble

impulses; pious men frequently have shameful weaknesses. Inconsistent variations appear in most human characters.

We need to do some thinking along here, and St. Paul will help us to do this. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. vi. 7.) This is the law of plant life, as true as the very course of nature. It is the inspired illustration of man's moral efforts. Mark you, it is the man who sows. He sows by his thoughts, his words, his acts; by his daily choices, his faith or unfaith, as manifested in daily conduct.

Now to the specific application. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." His flesh is his own nature; it is his lower or evil nature. St. Paul frequently uses the word in this sense. He who sows to his evil nature shall from that source reap corruption. By yielding to his base desires, indulging his evil passions, he strengthens his evil nature. This apostolic teaching has the very transparency of truth. Evil acts always augment the evil nature.

"He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." We sow to the Holy Spirit by yielding to his influence and submitting to his guidance. He is in our better nature, striving with us to secure our best interest. If we co-work with him, he will enthrone himself in our moral nature, and thus help us to gain the mas-

tery over our evil self. By his help, for he is our Helper, our Paraclete, we can subdue the evil in us, escape from the dominion and darkness of sin, and walk or live in the light, as he is in the light. God in us is the Source of good and the Giver of eternal life. Corruption is in us; holiness is of God, and may become ours by divine help. We have independent badness, but no independent goodness.

But we are not to infer from this that there is any excuse for failing to do good. The necessary divine help is always at hand. We have the unrestricted right of choice between good and evil. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Without the ability to do either good or evil there would be no real choice. We have every facility for doing right, as we have for doing wrong. The vine might truthfully say: "I have no power to lift myself aloft; I am wholly dependent on the oak." But with the oak standing ready there is no excuse for low climbing.

"God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.) He works in us in order that we may will as he wills and do as he directs. With this help we are to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." This is a life work. St. Paul says: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I

myself should be a castaway." The word "body" here means the same evil nature we all have to fight against.

We should get a clear conception of depravity. Depravity does not consist in the possession of natural appetites and passions; but it does consist in the want of moral or spiritual power in and of ourselves to prevent the perversion of these natural faculties by sin. Man did not acquire appetite and passion by the fall. They were natural to him before. He was an animal before he became a sinner, and of course had all the appetites and passions which belong to animal nature. Every natural appetite and passion was then proper and useful. They are still useful and of themselves are without sin. Man lost the balance of moral power when he lost God. His nature was thence one-sided. The self was all that remained. His only inclination was to follow self. Consequently of his own nature he is inclined to evil, and that continually. The evil is not in the possession but in the perversion of these natural qualities. This is done by actual sin, not by hereditary guilt.

Let us examine the appetites and passions and see that they are of themselves innocent and useful:

1. Appetite for food and drink. It is perfectly manifest that man had this before sin.



He was permitted to eat of all the trees in the garden save one. Appetite is not wrong, but one of the great blessings of life. Its perversion leads to excess, gluttony, and drunkenness.

2. Temper. This is one of the best qualities of our nature. It is the temper that makes the man; it is a Godlike quality which rings true in every trying emergency. Innately God-given, it is strengthened and perfected in the trials of life. Therefore the nearer to God we live, the finer is the grade of our temper. From this naturally spring the high qualities of fidelity, integrity, courage—in fact, all the ingredients of best character. The man whose faith is firmly fixed in God may be trusted to stand true in the severest trials of earth and time.

How abundantly this was manifested in Jesus! View him from any angle, and it is the temper, the innate quality of the Man, you admire. He hated everything that was wrong and loved everything that was good. Consequently he hated sin with Godlike intensity and loved the sinner with sacrificial devotion. His integrity was absolutely invincible. Every one who becomes acquainted with his character knows that here was a Man whom no force on earth could swerve to the extent of a hair's breadth from the right. His courage was perfect.

The men who have been most like him have

shown the best quality of temper. The finished temper of the apostolic preachers turned the world upside down. Think of the temper of Luther, Knox, Wesley, and others like them, who from time to time have bent the world toward righteousness.

The perversion of temper leads to envy, jealousy, malice, hatred, revenge, and murder. Here is a bold fountain of evil from which a stream of woes has followed man through every age and into every clime.

3. Physical love. This is not a heritage of sin. Our ritual emphasizes the fact that marriage was instituted in the time of man's innocence. When sanctified in holy wedlock, it is one of the most ennobling qualities of the soul. Matrimony is not by Protestants deemed a sacrament, but surely its influences for good are very nearly sacramental. It is refining, elevating, and ennobling. It is the bond of the home, and therefore the pledge of good to both Church and State.

When physical love degenerates into lust, it is one of the basest of human passions. Here is another bitter fountain from which flows a stream of anguish, remorse, and ruin. The primrose path of festal dalliance leads fatally to the adder's den of death.

Depravity, therefore, does not consist in the

possession of appetites and passions. These belong to us by nature; we brought them with us from the garden of paradise. Properly controlled by grace, they are the drawing cords which lead us up toward God and heaven. Warped and perverted by sin, they become the thongs which drag us down to hell.

Depravity is the loss of original righteousness, the loss of our primal connection with God, the loss of the innate power to worship God acceptably, and to do things pleasing and agreeable to him. Our moral position, therefore, is that of utter weakness. Here is where God in the atonement comes to our rescue and makes us strong in Christ and conquerors through his grace.



## ARTICLE X.

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### THE SPIRITUAL STATE OF INFANTS.

"OUR children, though subject to the ills of depravity, are nevertheless, by the merits of Christ's death and passion, born in a state of salvation. The effects of his death being coequal in time with the effects of the fall of Adam, the transmissible guilt of our federal head was met and canceled by the atoning mercy of our Christ. Therefore, our children purchased by his blood, are born justified by his grace and subjects of his kingdom."



## THE SPIRITUAL STATE OF INFANTS.

THE Bible teaches in regard to infants:

1. That they are born subject to the ills incident to the universal depravity of man. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. li. 5.) It was surely not the intention of the Psalmist to impute unusual sin to his parents, but only to plead the infirmities incident to our common human life, the handicap of our native depravity. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) All sinned in Adam, but the guilt of sin was not transmitted to Adam's posterity. That was canceled by the atonement. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) Only the concomitants of the sin, "the ills that flesh is heir to," were transmitted. "Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me." (Isa. xliii. 27.) Ah, yes, Isaiah, wise prophet, thou hast touched the plague spot of thy time and mostly of all times! Hereditary ills and false teachers make a large part of the world's full cup of woe. But it seems unnecessary to cite additional texts. The whole Book is filled with

the thought that mankind are suffering from the effects of depravity and the prevalence of sin.

2. Our children are born justified. "Therefore as by the offense of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom. v. 18.) The plain meaning of this text is that to the extent that condemnation came by the fall, to that same extent justification came by Christ. And this was for all men justification to life. Then our children are born justified, or innocent; also they are born spiritually alive, not spiritually dead.

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Rom. v. 19.) Just as many as were made sinners by the transgression, that same many were made righteous, or innocent, by the obedience of Christ. The word *δίκαιος*, ordinarily translated righteous, should in this place be rendered innocent. When the word refers to men capable of moral action, it should be rendered righteous, indicating right conduct; but when it is applied to things and to infants, it should surely be translated innocent. When Judas said, "I have betrayed innocent blood," he used this word, and it is thus correctly translated. When Jesus said that the righteous



blood of all those slain should come upon that generation, the sense shows that the word should be translated innocent. The accumulated accountability for all the innocent blood which that people had shed was coming on that generation. Both Groves and Hickie, whose lexicons were prepared with special reference to the New Testament, sustain this view.

Therefore all who are made sinners because of their connection with Adam are made innocent because of their connection with Christ. It certainly does appear that the great theologian of the New Testament really believed and intended to teach that children in consequence of the atonement are born justified; that they are truly innocent of any sin or guilt, inherited, imputed, or otherwise attaching to them.

3. Our children are born subjects and beneficiaries of the spiritual kingdom of God. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." The Great Teacher here refers not only to the innocence and gentleness but also to the nature of the child, its sinlessness and coalescence with the divine nature. "Of *such* is the kingdom." The kingdom is not made up of people who resemble these children in certain particulars, but of people who are one with them in spiritual qualities. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God

as a little child, he shall not enter therein," manifestly as a little child receives the kingdom.

If adults have to get in the same spiritual attitude as little children in order to receive the kingdom, it is evident that the children, being already in that attitude, do receive it. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." The complete self-abnegation of the child is the standard for those who become greatest in the kingdom. Thus children in some things become the measure of adult proficiency.

St. Mark, as usual, is more graphic: "And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." Thus does the Great Teacher identify little children with himself and with his kingdom.

To contend that these little children were adults with childlike dispositions is too vapid for serious consideration. Luke says they were infants, and that accords with the circumstances of the case.

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 10.) What-

ever else this scripture means, it certainly does teach that children have a warm place in the affections of Jesus and a well-assured place in his kingdom. Some think the reference is to the guardian angels. But it was *their* angels, something which they themselves possessed. It is well known that the words "angel" and "spirit" were used synonymously in that age.

To my mind it is clear that the reference is to their spiritual relation to God. Their spirits see God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The pure in heart, whether adults or children, see, or enjoy, God, and in both cases for the same reason, because of their spiritual affinity with God.

We need not infer from the words "in heaven" that the beholding was done in another world. St. Paul says: "Our conversation is in heaven." We know that it was also done upon earth. People who live in a heaven upon earth are prepared to live in a heaven hereafter.

These scriptures, we think, clearly sustain the first statement of the Article: "Our children, though subject to the ills of depravity, are, nevertheless, by the merits of Christ's death and passion, born in a state of salvation."

"The effects of Christ's death are coequal in time with the effects of Adam's sin." The atonement was not an afterthought, but part of God's

original plan and provided in advance of the fall. Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The sin of the world was the first, the original sin, called "sin of the world" because it involved all the race. The guilt of this sin was canceled by the atonement without any intervening time. Had this not been done, there would have been a possibility of souls being lost without redemption, and that for no fault of theirs. The intelligent God has always worked through an intelligible plan, as the following passages show: "According as he hath chosen us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world." (Eph. i. 4.) "Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last days for you." (1 Pet. i. 19, 20.)

There is no inconsistency, as some might suppose, in the statement that infants, while subject to the ills of depravity, are nevertheless in a state of salvation. That is the condition of every adult saint on earth. It is exactly what Paul had to contend with: "I keep under my body and bring it under subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

If children are in a state of salvation and justified, are they not also regenerated? The Bible is silent on this subject. Where God is silent, man should be slow to speak. But is it not an axiom of our theology that when one is justified he is at the same moment regenerated? This applies to justification by faith and refers to adults. It may not apply to infants, because theirs is a different kind of justification. Infants are justified because of innocence; adults in the sense of pardon. These two meanings are recognized by all lexicographers, and any one can see that they are widely different.

Fortunately, for the better understanding of this whole subject we have the spiritual history of some children given in the Bible. Samuel, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist were each consecrated to God from infancy, and each lived up to the expectations of his early training. It is said of John that he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. The same is implied in the history of the other two. Then there was no time in the lives of these persons when they were not acceptable to God.

Like all other children who survive the period of infancy, they passed from the spiritual state in which they were born into a state of personal accountability; but in their case no part of responsible life was given to sin. Filled with the

Spirit from birth on through life, there was manifestly no time when they were not saved. They passed from a state of natal salvation, of innocence and sinlessness in which they were born, into a state of conscious obedience, of justification by faith. At the instance of justifying faith they were born from above. Old things passed away, all things became new.

John, Samuel, and Jeremiah differed from most children in having the best religious training; but there is no evidence that they were spiritually of a different species. Had they lived on a plane different from the rest of mankind, their example would have been worth nothing to the world. Neither would they have been suitable leaders of men in their generations.

What was done in their lives can be done in others. It is possible for children to pass from the innocence of childhood to a conscious Christian life, else there would of necessity be a period of sin. Surely we cannot believe that God has made it necessary for men to sin.

From all this the conclusion is irresistible that the efforts of the Church should be unceasing to conserve the spiritual assets she already has in her little children. On a memorable occasion, when the Great Teacher was impressing upon Peter the supreme importance of his life work, his first command was: "Feed my lambs." Paul said



to the elders of the Church at Ephesus: "Take heed to yourselves and to *all* the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers." "Take heed," says the Master, "that ye despise not one of these little ones." Woe betide the Church whose pulpit becomes the rostrum of science, while the sheep go hungry and the lambs go astray!





## ARTICLE XI.

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### FREE WILL.

"THE condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing [aiding] us that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."



## FREE WILL.

THIS Article is a companion to the one on depravity. The two together show the twofold character of our moral nature, our contradictory self, with tendencies to evil and tendencies to good. Our evil nature, called by St. Paul "the flesh" and "the body," and in this Article man's own nature, tends to evil, only evil, and that continually.

This accords with universal experience. There is not a man in all the world who does not know that there is a nature in him which tends to evil, tends to sag, to drag down, and make him worse.

Our better nature inclines to good, manifests itself in impulses and longings for better things. The tendency is to yield to God, the Holy Spirit, and by his aid work for righteousness. Every man feels and knows that his aspirations for good are of a nobler kind and spring from a nobler source than that in him which is the source of evil.

"Wherefore we have no power to do good works, without the grace of God by Christ preventing [aiding] us." Our good works are done conjointly with God. "We are coworkers together with God." God works in us that we may

will as he wills and then do according to that divine will.

Our help is in God. We are very weakness itself and as nothing in his hands; yet he has taken us into copartnership with himself and has endowed us with the mighty power of faith, the victory that overcometh the world.

“That we may have a good will”—this is the main thing in the battle of life. So long as the will is for the right and unconquered, the conquering power abides. Temporary defeat may seem to brush away every chance of success; but the unsubdued will, aided by the power of faith in the mightier power of God, will rise above defeat as surely as God is on the winning side in the battle for righteousness.

“And working with us when we have that good will”—this is the way all the spiritual work of the world is done. Here is the philosophy of preaching: God working through willing men to accomplish the greatest good to the human race.

## *ARTICLE XII.*

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### THE JUSTIFICATION OF MAN.

“WE are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.”



## THE JUSTIFICATION OF MAN.

THE primary meaning of justification given by Webster is: "The act of justifying; a showing to be just, or conformable to law, rectitude, or propriety." It is showing that there is no guilt, no wrong; a vindication. Justification in this sense abides with innocence. In this sense all infants are justified.

Whatever hereditary guilt was due to fall on man because of Adam's sin was met and canceled once for all by the merits of Christ's death. "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." This is a plain statement of fact. First, that in consequence of Adam's sin condemnation came upon all men; and, secondly, in consequence of Christ's death, this condemnation was removed and the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. This took effect simultaneously with the first sin.

Therefore we say without a shadow of doubt that all infants are justified—that is, they are all innocent—and, as we have just seen, justification naturally and necessarily goes with innocence. In a secondary sense justification is

synonymous with pardon. It is the remission or forgiveness of sins. This is the justification spoken of in this Article. It is that which may be obtained by adult sinners. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "By him all who believe are justified." "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." "Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law." It is unnecessary to heap up texts; the entire Book is saturated with the idea of justification by faith.

But why is faith made the condition of pardon? There must be something in the nature of faith which renders a man a fit subject for justification. Consider the estimate which God puts on faith: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." This statement was first made in Genesis xv. 6 and is quoted several times by New Testament writers, showing that they believed it contained a great truth as to the nature and value of faith.

There can be no doubt that the principle here revealed applies to all men; that any man exercising faith like Abraham, that faith will be counted to him for righteousness. But, as if to add certainty to security, the great apostle asserts the universality of the principle thus: "It



was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Rom. iv. 23, 24.)

There is here revealed to us the great spiritual law that faith is imputed or counted to man for righteousness—that is, that faith is of the same value in God's estimate as righteousness, and he accepts it as an equivalent. Now, on what principle of reason and justice can this be done? Simply this: true faith, possible only to the man who is honestly seeking God, brings the mind of such a man to the same attitude toward God and right as that of a righteous man. Such a man is no longer in rebellion, but his will is one with the divine will. Such a man can be trusted with pardon and also with grace, for when a man's sins are forgiven he is at the same time born from above.

Any executive would be justified in pardoning a convict if he could know that the convict was no longer criminal, but that his attitude toward the law and society had been so changed that henceforth he would be a safe and useful citizen. The principle is safe and sane; therefore God acts upon it.

What is the character of that faith which God can accept in lieu of righteousness? It must be

such as to change man's attitude from rebellion or indifference to that of acquiescence and trust. To reach this faith repentance performs an important function.

Repentance is faith in the making, faith in the struggle for self-renunciation and distrust of every phase of self-righteousness until it results in the blessed peace of full and filial trust in God. Such faith puts man into the providence of God, where he can do the best work of his life.

Men were building a railroad bridge across a river. The iron beams which were to support the heavy trains were necessarily large. One beam refused to go into its place; it was a fraction of an inch too long. That is like the man whose faith is incomplete; he refuses to get into his place. What is to be done? The beam must be made shorter. So it was covered from end to end with ice. That ice is repentance. It is slowly but surely doing its work. The beam is chilled and dropped into its place. Repentance has done its work; faith is complete; the beam is ready for service. So when man fits into his place, where God can trust him with the riches of grace, he becomes a new man in Christ and is ready for service.

*ARTICLE XIII.*

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REGENERATION, OR THE NEW BIRTH.

“REGENERATION, or the New Birth, is the spiritual change, wrought by the Holy Spirit, in man’s moral nature; whereby the man becomes a child of God.”



## REGENERATION, OR THE NEW BIRTH.

WE cannot overestimate the importance of this doctrine. The new birth is the beginning of spiritual life by faith. We become the children of God by faith, a part of the household of the great Father, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," and heirs to the riches of grace which the eternal years shall unfold.

One of the clearest declarations on this subject occurs in the conversation which Jesus had with Nicodemus, recorded in John iii. 1-7: "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This abrupt homily seems to have cut short any further compliments by this ruler of the Jews. Jesus saw at once that this man's conception of the spiritual life was altogether wrong, so he went directly to what was needed. In further explanation he added: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Life in the kingdom of God is of supreme importance. This emphasizes the great necessity of a spiritual birth. Hence the final dictum rings out with startling clearness: "Ye must be born from above."

Why water was connected with the spiritual

birth is difficult to see. But just at that time baptism was on the wave of popular thought. From time immemorial proselytes to the Jewish faith had been initiated by baptism. The Pharisees and their numerous adherents had carried ablutions to a ridiculous extent, always refusing to eat till they had scrubbed to the elbow. And when they returned from the market or other business places, they must wash to prevent defilement. They even went to the extent of sprinkling their cooking utensils and household furniture.

And besides all this, John the Baptist had just then stirred the nation to its center by preaching in the wilderness the baptism of repentance. All Jerusalem and Judea had gone out to see this strange prophet, and many, even the great majority, had submitted to his ordinance. Thus baptism was for the hour the prominent and popular thing. And always in the best grade of Jewish thought water baptism was the emblem of purity, the symbol of an inward spiritual baptism, cleansing the soul of impurity as water cleanses the body. No doubt Jesus perceived that, owing to all these conditions, Nicodemus could get a clearer idea of this birth from above by coupling it with its symbolic representative, water baptism.

Some, basing their arguments mainly on this passage, have magnified the importance of water

baptism beyond all reason, making it about equal with the baptism of the Spirit.

When John's ministry closed and Jesus went north, confining his teaching mainly to Galilee and adjacent territory, there is not another word about baptism. During all the years of the Saviour's ministry, after John's imprisonment, if there was even one person baptized there is no record of it. Baptism dropped out of view even more suddenly than it had before risen to prominence. Of course if baptism had been necessary to salvation Jesus would have been preaching it all those years.

A very clear statement of the doctrine is given in John i. 11-13: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not [he did not measure up, or rather down, to their traditions]. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood [not by heredity], nor of the will of the flesh [not by fatiguing pilgrimages or bodily lacerations], nor of the will of man [not even by the higher efforts of self-righteousness], but of God." They are sons of God, the aristocracy of unworldliness, from whose ranks heaven gains increasing population.

St. Paul teaches this same great truth in different phraseology: "We are his workmanship,



created in Christ Jesus unto good works." (Eph. ii. 10.) "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.)

Thus the change in our spiritual nature wrought by the Holy Spirit not only changes our relation to God but also to everything else. All things become new to us because of the new life in us. Every fiber of our being is quickened by new responsibilities and new opportunities.

This leads naturally to the thought that, important as this vital change is, the emphasis should be laid on the life flowing from the birth rather than on the birth itself. The birth amounts to nothing unless the life is maintained. The best evidence of birth is the life we now have.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 9.) The spiritual condition, the life, rather than a specific experience, is here in mind. The important thing is not a memory, but a life full of health and vigor; not what took place long ago, but what now prevails. "His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The spiritual life is so abounding that sin is repugnant, hateful, and cannot find lodgment in the thought. While he thus maintains purity of



thought by spiritual supremacy he is immune from sin.

Occasionally we see a man of such robust health that he passes unharmed through prevailing epidemics. Germs by the million enter into his body, only to be overcome by his superior vitality. So should a Christian live in spiritual health, with vitality complete at every point, to resist every approach of evil.

All Christians have not the same experience in regard to this spiritual change. With some the experience is very vivid; they know the very time and place of their conversion. Others have no such remembrance. These need not be discouraged. If they are now alive in Christ, they need not worry about their spiritual birth any more than about their natural birth.



*ARTICLE XIV.*

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WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

“THE witness of the Spirit is the divine assurance of our acceptance with God, imparted to our consciousness by the Holy Spirit.”



## WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

THERE can be no reasonable doubt as to the ability of the Holy Spirit to communicate knowledge to man's consciousness without the medium of language, and, having the power, there can be no reasonable doubt that he uses that power for our good.

This is implied in many passages such as these: "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." "I also labor, striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily." "Make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight."

It is implied also in the very nature of inspiration, which is an inbreathing of the Holy Spirit on the human mind, uplifting and quickening all the mental faculties, with a healthful glow of all the better emotions of the soul.

It is by the Holy Spirit working in us that the soul receives a sense of sweet communion, a blessed peace and restful assurance; the soul becomes satisfied, assured of its acceptance with God. Such state of mind is the preacher's magazine of power as he proclaims the convicting truth; it is also the layman's strength as he fights in the ranks for God and right.

This same inbreathing of the Holy Spirit was the source of the prophetic gift in the olden time. The mind of the prophet was so uplifted and so coalescent with the divine mind that it touched the divine prescience, and thus secured a knowledge of future events, often dim perceptions shrouded in mystery, frequently not understood fully by the prophet himself, but sufficiently plain to be understood when the fulfillment came.

This communion of God with the human spirit is world-wide, coextensive, in fact, with the human race. The revelation of divine truth given to the world through a long line of pious men from the earliest times to the last of the apostles was but an incident of this age-long communion of God with man. Aside from the men by whom the Bible was written, this communion is not for revealing new truth; it is for the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of men; for the comforting or reproving, as need may be, of people in all lands and all ages.

Without this communion we could not in any true sense know God. And to know him is the very essence of spiritual and eternal life. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.)

Without the touch divine in the human soul we could never have assurance that our prayers

are answered. In fact, with God entirely cut off there could be no true prayer. Is it not true that often our prayers begin with God? Surely we must believe that God frequently inspires the prayers he delights to answer.

Religious worship throughout the world has for its basis the belief, as universal as man, that somehow we are in touch with the divine Nature.

But for us this question of the witness of the Spirit is settled by the plain teaching of the Bible. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 16.) This surely is evidence that true Christians have in themselves the evidence of their filial relation to God. The word translated "witness" has in this place a prepositional prefix which suggests a joint testimony. The Spirit himself, together with our spirits, beareth witness, of course to our consciousness, that we are the children of God.

This agrees perfectly with 1 John v. 10: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 15.) God sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts, making known to us beyond a doubt that we are his children, and our glad hearts respond, crying, "Father, Father."





## *ARTICLE XV.*

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### CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

"CHRISTIAN Perfection, or Sanctification, is the maturity of Christian experience by divine grace, whereby we are able to love God with all our capacities, and to love our fellow man so as to allow him perfect equality of rights with ourselves, so that we will gladly do for him all that we desire that he in like conditions should do for us."



## CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

NATURALLY we look to the Great Teacher for the standard of excellence in Christian life most acceptable to him. It is interesting to note that he places the standard just where the wisdom of the world places the standard of excellence in every department of human effort—at the end of human capacity. Anything is perfect after its kind when it has received the full measure of human effort. Take a poem (it may be but a short lyric), look at it from every angle; you find it is complete, a finished product. Nothing can be added to enhance its excellence. Nothing can be taken from it without marring its beauty. So with a piece of statuary or any other example of perfected human effort. Of course absolute perfection is not to be expected. That does not come within the range of human effort. God alone has that supreme excellence. Our goodness, our purity, our greatness is essentially relative.

Jesus has himself pointed out the proper attainment for each of his followers: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

The second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mark xii. 30, 31.)

Love, as every one knows, is the highest, purest, and most unselfish function of our nature. It is the very essential condition of spiritual life. Christian perfection is, therefore, the perfection of love in us. Our supreme love is due to God. When we love him with the full measure of our faculties, we are sure to love our fellow man so as to do for him what we desire he should do for us were our relations exchanged, he in our place, we in his. In this we reach the limit of our endeavor. This is Christian perfection.

Of course as our faculties continue to grow, our capacity to love will increase and there will be an advance in the maturity of our love. Thus Christian perfection, being necessarily a personal quality depending on the capacity of each person, must vary in grade with each individual.

Then let us consider the standard of efficiency which determines or defines sanctification for each Christian: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart [with all thy tender sentimental affection and emotional nature], and with *all* thy soul [with all the deeper feelings of devotion, the loyal aspirations of sincere worship, and the longing after communion with God, the thirst for immortal life with which the Lord thy God hath endowed thee], and with *all* thy mind [with

all thy intellectual powers. If you have imagination, genius, the high gift of reason, a fair use of language, the noble endowment of education—whatever the gift, let all be devoted to the service and sincere worship of God], and with *all* thy strength.” This certainly includes our physical ability. We may have only the strength of muscle and physical endurance of humble toil, but even in servile labors we may render acceptable service to God.

“If done to obey thy laws,  
Even servile labors shine;  
Hallowed is toil, if this the cause,  
The meanest work divine.”

This is also a saving clause. The *et cetera* to make sure that none of our resources are left out of God’s service, and not the powers singly, but combined and unified make the full measure of strength for God and right. With some the main resource for good is the possession of wealth, with others the ability to make money. Some have the fine gift of song, others the power of speech. All can do something. Whatever the resources, let all be combined to love God.

“And thy neighbor as thyself.” Than these two laws there can be nothing higher. “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” These laws can never be repealed, can never be superseded by any better; they are

perfect for earth, heaven, or any world. With God these laws are innate; for man they are supreme. To obey them is Christian perfection.

But can this be done? Certainly. God never requires an impossibility; he does require our best. We give only a few passages of Scripture, of the many which might be cited, to show how fully this doctrine is taught in the Book. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. v. 23.) This text is very comprehensive. It insists that the whole man be kept blameless, sanctified, set apart to the service of God. This is in exact accord with the teaching of Jesus in regard to the two great commandments.

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. ii. 11.) The Sanctifier and the sanctified, the Saviour and the saved, are all of one nature, all of one great spiritual family. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." To have the Spirit of Christ is the supreme end to be attained. Then we shall be like him and strive to do his will.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be

holy and without blame before him in love.” (Eph. i. 4.) We learn from this scripture that God, even before the world had a beginning, planned to create or evolve out of human lives a type of character well-pleasing to himself, beings “holy and without blame before him in love.” All scripture looks to the production of just this type of man. Let us all strive to reach that standard. Jesus has taught us plainly how this is to be accomplished. If we live up to that standard, we will surely be among the elect of God.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. v. 48.) The word τέλειοι (teleioi), here rendered perfect, means finished or completed; it indicates that there should be nothing lacking in our spiritual life, no glaring defect in our character. We should be complete in our sphere, as God is complete in his sphere.





## ARTICLE XVI.

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### THE ENTIRE EFFICIENCY OF CHRISTIANITY.

"CHRISTIANITY contains all the truth necessary not only for man's salvation and the right conduct of his life; but also for the solution of all problems, domestic, social, civic, national, and international. It contains all the principles which, rightly understood, honestly accepted, and made the invariable rule of action and of judgment, will lead to the highest and purest civilization of which the human race is capable."



## THE ENTIRE EFFICIENCY OF CHRISTIANITY.

THIS is the belief of the great majority of Christians. It is an inspiring faith, noble, uplifting, and purifying. Then why not put it in our Church creed and preach it from every pulpit in our Zion? The teachings of Jesus stand for the right, happiness, and greatest good of universal man.

There is not a conflict between man and man or between different classes of men or between nations which would not at once disappear if all parties to the contest would honestly apply the principles taught by the Teacher of Galilee. Likewise all domestic infelicities, all strained relations between husbands and wives or between parents and children, would melt like snow in summer in the warm atmosphere of the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount is the antidote to divorce scandals. A sincere regard for each other's rights, a sympathetic appreciation each of the other's position, a disposition to see things, not through the eye of selfishness, but with the eyes of justice and love—this is the solvent in which divorce suits would melt in the brewing.

A considerate exercise of forbearance and common sense is very apt to result in harmony.

The principles taught by Christ furnish the normal basis of agreement between capital and labor. Let men of wealth study with a mind open to fairness the rights, happiness, and general welfare of their employees. Likewise let the men of toil consider the rights of capital and what they themselves would desire were they the capitalists.

"As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise." This is indeed the Golden Rule. It is the rule above all price. It is the vital law of harmony in human society. But you say it is not practicable. Indeed, it is genuinely practicable. It is the most universally applicable law ever given for our guidance. It fits every condition. It is the only rule of social life invariably and permanently effective. All laws based upon selfishness and appealing only to selfish instinct are makeshifts.

This law appeals to that which is best and noblest in man. It cannot be observed from low and impure motives. Laws which appeal to self-interest may be kept from selfish and impure motives, but obedience to this law is impossible except from the best of motives. Get in accord with God, and obedience to this law becomes spontaneous, free, and joyous.

The teachings of Jesus look to the renovation of all society by putting each man in right relation to every other man. These principles apply with equal aptness to every age and nation. They were intended for all the world. The great commission rings with a conquering note: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations [make disciples, or Christians, of all nations], . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.)

This is the command of a Conqueror to a conquering host. It means nothing less than the Christianization of all the world, not in name only, but in that high type of civilization which must flow from the teaching of Jesus. This spreading of true religion throughout all nations was foretold by the prophets. It was also foreshadowed by Christ in his matchless parables and plain declarations: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xii. 32.) Here, then, is the law of spiritual attraction which operates to bring all men into harmony with God.

In his prayer of consecration, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel by St. John, Jesus begins with his relation to the Father, then

passes to his immediate disciples, praying earnestly for their spiritual unity with himself and the Father. The petition then rises to all who shall believe on him through their word. Evidently this prayer includes their successors in preaching the gospel, for soon he reaches the vision of world-wide influence: "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

It is a wonderful consummation for the world to reach a belief in the divine mission of Jesus, but this, though great, is not the best. "I in them," meaning all disciples, "and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." The word here rendered perfect means finished, finished in one, the completed work of mediatorial grace.

Then follows the petition which rings with a final note of triumph: "That the world may know that thou didst send me, and that thou lovest them as thou lovest me." Who are included as the objects of God's love in the phrase, "thou lovest them"? Evidently the disciples and all who are one with them. Is the world included? Is the world ultimately to reach the high proficiency in the knowledge of God so as to be included among the saved, the objects of God's special love?

The Old Testament has foregleams of the spread of true religion among all nations. The prophets rose to their highest dignity when they

caught visions of the world-wide, mastering power of their truth. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations." (Ps. xxii. 27, 28.) "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Ps. ii. 8.) "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." (Isa. xlix. 6.)

Christ the Messiah meets this most important expectation of the Old Testament scriptures. He embodies in himself the highest intent and prophecy of the Old Testament. The best the prophets ever saw was more than fulfilled in him. It is plain that no other kind of Messiah could have done this. He was rejected in his own age because of his lowly condition and the spiritual interpretation of his mission. It is plain from the view of the twentieth century that this conquering truth, so perfectly adapted to the betterment of all men, could not have been so efficiently presented in any other way.

This truth shines in the parables: the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest. Growth and maturity pertain to both good and evil. The harvest is the end of the world; the



reapers are the angels. The parables are of world-wide significance. The mustard seed is the least of seeds, yet from it springs a plant which is the greatest among herbs. The truth is expansive, whether in the man or among the world of men.

The expanding power of the truth is most plainly illustrated by the parable of the leaven: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." The truth lodged in the mind works its way to permanent conviction: lodged in the world, it permeates all society, working for universal peace and good will among men.

It is pitiable to see large groups of men making frantic experiments with wild theories of socialism, new thought, or higher law to right the ills of this twentieth century and neglecting, if not denouncing, the only Teacher who, nearly two thousand years ago, gave to men the real practical solution of all social ills. There is not a wrong social condition in all the world which may not be righted by the principles taught by Jesus.



## *ARTICLE XVII.*

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### GOOD WORKS.

“ALTHOUGH good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is known by its fruits.”



## GOOD WORKS.

Good works are the results of faith. True faith in God will surely prompt us to try to please God by acts of worship and in kind deeds to men. Every Christian should train himself in the divine art of doing good. Study how to speak the apt words and to do the fitting deeds, that people may be made wiser and better. Try to make life useful by luring your associates to purer thoughts and nobler living.

“Good works cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgment.” They have no atoning merit; they cannot be a substitute for Christ. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” (1 Cor. iii. 11-15.)

We cannot make the foundation; God made  
(141)

that. But we can build thereon. Good works are the material out of which on this foundation we build character for time and eternity. Good works naturally spring from faith in Christ, and when guided by consecrated wisdom count for much in this life; and for those who are faithful unto death they will not fail of reward in the life to come. This seems clearly to be the teaching of this text.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph. ii. 8-10.) In this scripture we are plainly taught that we are saved by grace, and that this grace or saving force comes to us through our faith as a condition; and to be more explicit the apostle adds: “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” By works here the sacred writer evidently means such works as we might attempt to do in order to save ourselves independently of Christ, and consequently be able to boast of our independence and our proficiency. All such works of self-righteousness are as filthy rags, good for nothing.

But, mark you, we are created in Christ Jesus “unto good works”; we are graduated by God’s grace, his saving mercy, for this very purpose of

good works. "God hath before ordained [or prepared] that we should walk [or live] in them." It is according to God's will, the order of his providence, that we live in good works.

These good works are the basis of our final reward; not the basis of salvation, but of reward. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works." (Matt. xvi. 27.) These are the words of the very Christ. "Thou [the Lord] renderest to every man according to his work." (Ps. lxii. 12.) "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. xvii. 10.) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.)

In the account of the final judgment, given by Jesus himself, the destinies of men turn on what they have done or failed to do. "I was hungry, and ye fed me," or "hungry, and ye fed me not." As if Jesus should say to each one of us: "I was in distress, and ye ministered to me, or failed to do so. The poor and distressed of earth are one with me in appeals to you. What you have done for these constitutes your treatment of me." We

owe a life service of gratitude to God, and he has stipulated that the obligation be discharged by doing good to men.

Here, then, is the whole question of works. St. Paul, the great theologian, fought vigorously against works on the one hand and, on the other hand, as vigorously insisted on good works as acceptable service to God. He was not inconsistent. Pharisaic works intended to purchase heaven, aside from Christ, are the vainest of all vain things. This is the doctrine Paul fought against. But good works done to glorify God in Christ are most acceptable to Heaven. This is the doctrine Paul fought for.

This view reconciles Paul not only with himself, but also with the teachings of St. James: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (Jas. ii. 20.) This is a cardinal point with St. James. He is sure that a living faith will show itself by works "Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works when he had offered up Isaac his son on the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works." That is the way a living faith always does. "And by works faith was made perfect." Certainly; that is the natural result.

The word "justification" is used with two very different meanings in Scripture. When it is said that we are justified by faith, then the word is

used in the sense of pardon, our sins are forgiven. The original and stricter meaning is, "to show one to be innocent." When Abraham offered Isaac at the command of God, he showed himself to be innocent of the sin of disobedience. In this sense he was justified by works.

Now, the final conclusion is that, according to the teachings of the Book, there is no atoning merit in works of any kind, but that works done in obedience to God's will have rewardable merit. It depends altogether where the works are put and the motive with which they are done. When we undertake to do God's part of the work of salvation, we are far astray. When we accept God's plan and become coworkers with him and do the works he has commanded with the intent to glorify him, then we are laying up treasures in heaven.





## *ARTICLE XVIII.*

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### WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION.

“VOLUNTARY works, besides, over and above God’s commandments, which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety. For by them men do declare, That they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.”



## WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION.

THIS Article carries with it the Scriptural refutation of the error denounced. The quotation is found in Luke xvii. 10: "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." This clearly shows that there is nothing profitable which can be done beyond those things which are commanded. Duty covers the whole ground of man's capability.

The great commandment which we considered under a previous Article plainly shows this. We are to love God with *all* the heart, *all* the soul, *all* the mind, *all* the strength. Included in this is the second commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This surely covers all the ground. There is no heart, no soul, no mind, no strength left for anything else.



## *ARTICLE XIX.*

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### SIN AFTER JUSTIFICATION.

“Nor every sin, willingly committed after justification, is the sin against the Holy Spirit, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification: after we have received the Holy Spirit, we may depart from the grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God rise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.”



## SIN AFTER JUSTIFICATION.

THE doctrine set forth in this Article is two-fold: the possibility of falling into sin after justification, so that we are no longer in a saved condition, and the chance of repentance and forgiveness if we do so fall. Two errors also are combated—to wit: Any sin committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Spirit, and that after we have been justified we can no more sin as long as we live here.

The possibility and even danger of falling away from the grace given in regeneration so as to be lost is clearly taught in the Bible. St. Paul says: "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, after I have preached the gospel to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. ix. 27.) The evident meaning is that this great preacher realized that unless he was very watchful there was danger that he, even after persuading others to seek salvation, might be finally lost. Taken at its face value, this scripture means nothing less than this. In this connection he gives this general warning: "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Such warning befits well the weakness of human nature.

“When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live?” (Ezek. xviii. 24.) This is precisely the question. Those who teach “once in grace, always in grace,” tell us that, no matter how far a man goes astray, if he has been truly born of the Spirit, the providence of God will somehow bring him back and he shall finally be saved.

Now, there is not only no warrant of Scripture for this, but the Book is plainly against it. The man in question was righteous, according to God’s standard of righteousness. Evidently had he continued in his righteousness he would have been saved. He turned from his fidelity to God and became a sinner, does according to all the abominations which the wicked man does. Shall he live? What is the surety of final salvation? Here is God’s answer: “All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be remembered; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.” The teaching of this entire chapter (the eighteenth of Ezekiel) impresses the fact of man’s personal responsibility to God. Each man is free to act for himself, and the consequences of his acts he must surely bear. The wicked, turning from his wickedness, shall live; the righteous, turning



from his righteousness, shall die. Note the twenty-sixth verse: "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die." Words could not be plainer. If he dies in his sins, for these sins he shall die. Here is a death after the natural death, a death more than that of the body—a death of the soul.

"The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth." (Ezek. xxxiii. 12.) The language could not be more explicit. Just as a sinner may turn from his sins and be saved, so a saint may turn from his righteousness and be lost.

But hear what God says in the next verse: "When I shall say to the righteous that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered: but for his iniquity he hath committed, he shall die for it." All the assurances of eternal life are conditional; they depend on our faithfulness. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The fight

must continue till death. There is no place for the stacking of arms this side the grave.

“Ne’er think the victory won,  
Nor lay thine armor down;  
The work of faith will not be done  
Till thou obtain the crown.”

“Again, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right, . . . he shall surely live, he shall not die.” Likewise: “When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.” From all this scripture it is clear that a righteous man is just as free to go into sin and be lost as a sinner is free to turn from his sin and be saved.

There is no necessity for a Christian to sin, but if he does sin the way of repentance is open to him. “These things I write unto you, that ye sin not.” (1 John ii. 1.) The ideal Christian life is “that ye sin not.” Sin is here used in the appropriate sense of the violation of law—“sin is the transgression of the law”—and not in reference to the minor faults and foibles which are incident to all human life. There is no necessity for any man to violate any of God’s commandments.

“But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” The word *παράκλητος* (*parakletos*), the Paraclete, here rendered Advocate, is elsewhere translated Com-

forter. It means literally "one called to the side for help." Jesus is our Helper, our Friend in trouble. There is no greater trouble than that of falling into sin. In such case Jesus is the only real Helper; he whom we sin against is our sincerest sympathizer and our only rescuer. He loves the sinner, while he hates the sin.

Our only security against falling into sin is the conscious enjoyment continually of God's presence. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This expresses a state or condition rather than a single experience. The word *sperma*, correctly translated "seed," denotes also offspring, or posterity, the young life coming up. Here it seems to mean the new life constantly springing up and giving such spiritual health to the soul that sin has no chance to enter, just as a man may have such vigorous health of body that he passes unharmed where others fall a prey to contagion.

"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.) There is, therefore, no real excuse for any man who falls into sin. Neither is there ground for presumption that God will hold any man back from going any length into sin he is willing, determined to

go. The divine government proceeds on the principle, "equal rights to all and special privileges to none."

Our surety is in God. Only as we by faith draw strength from him does our integrity become invincible. "Who can separate us from the love of God?" No external force can do it. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) Where, then, is our danger? In ourselves. Evidently the apostle had in mind our ability to stand by faith in the power of God.

When we speak of God's power to keep the weakest of his children, language cannot be too strong. God puts us in the impregnable citadel of life; aye, we may lock ourselves in, but *the key remains on the inside* and we are still free agents. We are still in the world and may listen to the siren voice of sinful pleasure. The imagination is captured by the plausible conceptions of lust, and the tempted soul leaves its stronghold and falls a victim to sin.

"I know whom I have believed [trusted], and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

(2 Tim. i. 12.) Christ is able to keep us as long as we commit ourselves to him.

The second phase of the doctrine taught in the Article is that, having fallen into sin and forfeited our birthright as Christians, we may, nevertheless, by repentance and faith come back and again become the sons of God. The passage which seems to contradict this view is Hebrews vi. 4-6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Possibly this is a case similar to the camel and the eye of the needle. Impossible from the human viewpoint, but not impossible with God. And possibly this is not applicable in the case of ordinary backsliding.

This epistle was to the Hebrews. It was most natural for a Jew rejecting Christ to go back to Judaism. He would not apostatize in the Christian faith, but altogether from it and into a system of belief whose special function it was to reject and denounce Christ. We can see at once how impossible, speaking after the manner of men, it is to reach and persuade such a man to



come back and repent. Hence the force of the words: "They crucify unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." By their position they make themselves one with his murderers. This seems to be the explanation of this passage. Otherwise the Book abounds with appeals to backsliders to return and be saved.

The danger of apostasy, so plainly taught in the Scriptures, should often and earnestly be preached to our people as a safeguard against the insidious power of sin. Any belief that we can have an indulgence in sin without its reasonable penalty, any hope that God, by some special providence or grace, will intervene to save us from the legitimate consequences of our own conduct, is very pleasing to the carnal mind and goes to the aid of that evil spirit whose desire is to lead men to ruin.

All life, presenting as it does daily and hourly choices between good and evil, is a constant testing and consequently a constant building of character. This is real, not sham. The testing is genuine, not mockery. Each man must stand the tests of life, and so rise above them or fail in the hour of trial and be crushed beneath them. Favoritism is not admissible. Character must be genuine, and to be such must have the integrity which has stood the crucial tests in the winnowing processes of Providence.

## *ARTICLE XX.*

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### THE CHURCH.

“THE visible Church of Christ is the aggregate, or sum total, of all the congregations of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ’s ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.”





## THE CHURCH.

OUR Article on the Church is manifestly inadequate. It is descriptive of one single Church. A dozen members united in a society, having a pastor to preach the pure word of God and administer the sacraments, would be the visible Church on earth, according to that Article. The visible Church of Christ is composed of myriads of such congregations.

The Article is a good definition of a Christian Church. Therefore the visible Church of Christ must be the aggregate of all such Churches. Jesus said but little about the Church. One important saying should be noted, "Upon this rock I will build my Church," meaning the bedrock of truth contained in Peter's confession: "Thou art the Christ." This first confession of faith presents Christ as the long-promised Messiah, the Son of the living God. He is himself the only true foundation. The Church can be built on no other. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.)

There is no good reason to believe that Jesus meant to found his Church on Peter or any other mere man. *Peter* means "stone," but it does not

mean the rock on which the Church is built. "Thou art Peter [*πέτρος*, *petros*, a stone], and upon this rock [*πέτρα*, *petra*] I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 18.) If Jesus had intended to say he would build the Church on Peter, he would have used the same word in the second clause. The use of a different word shows a different meaning. The difference in the meaning of these words is this: *Πέτρος* (*petros*) is a stone, detached, such as one might pick up and handle; *πέτρα* (*petra*) is a rock, concreted in the earth and immovable, as a cliff.

Peter himself gives the meaning Christ intended: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious [this is Christ], ye also, as lively stones [these are the Church members, including Peter and all the apostles], are built up, a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. ii. 11, 12.) This settles forever the question as to the foundation upon which the Church is built.

The visible Church of Christ, then, is the sum, or aggregate, of all the congregations of Christians in all parts of the world, of whatever name or order. It is composed of people of every nation, tribe, or race, of every shade of color, and,

speaking practically, all the tongues of earth. No doubt the pure word of God as preached to many of these congregations is sadly mixed with errors and superstition. Many workers in this vast field are probably using mostly wood, hay, and stubble in building on this foundation; but in many, very many Churches the warning, comforting, saving note of the gospel trumpet rings with the clearness of truth and the energy of power. Gold, silver, precious stones are worked into the ever-growing temple of Christian civilization and will ultimately explain God's relation to men and reconcile men to God.

But we must draw a clear distinction between the Church of God and the kingdom of God. No words were oftener on the lips of Jesus than "the kingdom of God" or "the kingdom of heaven," phrases identical in meaning. All his parables and, we may safely say, all his teachings were to explain the nature of his kingdom.

The Church is visible, tangible, material in its outward aspect. The kingdom of God is wholly inward and spiritual. "The kingdom of God is within you." The Church is necessarily concerned with groups or bodies of men. The kingdom of God is concerned with the individual, each one separately. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. xiv. 17.)

Thus the kingdom of God on earth has its place in the soil, or spiritual nature, of man. It is the reign of God in human life. It is the divine Being touching, cleansing, comforting the human. It is God communing with man. "It is the divinity which stirs within us," and saves and guides the trusting soul. In the mind of Jesus no interest in all the universe seems to compare with this in point of importance. He made it the one purely unselfish petition in the prayer he taught us to pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Thus the universal instinct to pray was yoked with the cause of his kingdom. At that very time men, women, and children in every part of the world were praying. Many prayed to unworthy gods. Many prayers were lascivious appeals to gods of impurity. Many addressed gods of cruelty with screams of fear.

What a stroke of wisdom to draw this insuppressible instinct of the human soul into the service of the kingdom of peace! It was wisdom and goodness unsurpassed to lift this mighty force from the channels of impurity and fear into joyous and sweet communion with a loving Father. Think how this prayer has extended over the world by the conversion of nations to the Christian faith since Jesus taught it first to his disciples! And how it will continue to increase in

volume and power as other nations shall join the mighty host in praying for the kingdom to come! And what a glorious fact that this prayer has been answered every day and every hour since Jesus gave it to his Church! And how it will still more and more be answered as the kingdom with increasing power shall come unto the souls of increasing myriads of people!

The kingdom of heaven is sometimes presented as a new and wider experience in the divine life. Jesus said to his disciples: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.) This was about six months before he set his face to go up to Jerusalem for the last time. Long before this he had said to these same disciples: "The kingdom of God is within you." Three of them had seen his glory in the transfiguration, and all of them had concurred in the great confession: "Thou art the Christ." For three years they had listened to the most wonderful Teacher the world ever had. They were, therefore, the best-instructed men, religiously, in all the world at that time. Beyond question they had enjoyed much of the kingdom of God.

What, then, did Jesus mean? Simply this: that the kingdom of God spreads immeasurably before us with successive opportunities for the enjoyment of God and for the accomplishment of

his purposes in us. Several times before this he had made similar statements. As far back as the Sermon on the Mount (that sermon was mainly to the disciples) he had said, "Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world"; and yet in close connection with these sayings he declared, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

From all this we can perceive that the kingdom of heaven is an ever-ascending scale of enjoyment and usefulness. When we have gained one degree of divine life, then we stand at the door of a still higher degree. So that to each one of us it may be said again and again: "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

One of the most important doctrines taught in regard to the kingdom is that all little children are partakers of its salvation. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Then all children who die before reaching the age of accountability are saved. Thus fully one-half of the world is saved without an effort of gospel grace. Then from all lands, not only from the enlightened but even from the most degraded, there is constant increase in the population of



heaven. Even from the sudd of the Upper Nile, where the race seems to reach its lowest level, where the negro, on plots of land which here and there rise but little above the waters, builds his mud hut cone-shaped, leaving but a single hole through which he crawls into the mud and darkness to escape the stinging insects, and lives much like his neighbor, the crocodile; even from that benighted region the innocent ones are ascending to the Father of mercies.

The visible Church of Christ is the best outward expression of this inner spiritual kingdom. But the Church, great as it is, cannot fully represent this greater spiritual kingdom. These two great forces most generally work together. Each aids the other. But the spiritual is the most potent, because it is the most direct power of God. While the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes, it is the Spirit which gives the gospel its force; and the Spirit is independent of all human agency. The gospel reaches many, but the Spirit of God reaches all human souls. Wherever that Spirit touches a human life, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.





## ARTICLE XXI.

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### ROMISH ERRORS.

“THE Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshiping and adoration as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugant to the Word of God. Likewise the sacrifice of masses, in which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.”



## ROMISH ERRORS.

THESE are called Romish errors because they are sanctioned, if not really taught, by high officials of the Roman Catholic Church and practiced by members of that communion. They are relics of a dark age, the accretions which grew up about the Christian faith in the ages when the human reason was to a great extent dormant and superstition grew almost unchecked. Such errors are strangely out of place in this twentieth century, and especially in this enlightened country.

To use an image or picture to aid in worship is to violate the plain commandment of God: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." (Ex. xx. 4, 5.) Whenever the priest elevates the host, or elements of the sacrament, for the purposes of worship, he and the people who bow in worship to the same are alike violators of this commandment.

The doctrine of purgatory, with the convenient idea attached that the priest may pray one

out for a money consideration, is entirely too commercial for genuine religion. So also the idea that the priest has the pardoning power and can release a man from his sins for a fee is of the same character. The whole scheme smacks of commercialism and fraud.

The infant must be baptized into the Church in order to be saved. The marriage, to be valid, must be celebrated by some official of the Church; the people must be often shrived through life; when they die, they must have extreme unction; when they are dead, they must be prayed out of purgatory. All this, of course, is to be paid for. Thus the money clutch is upon the man from the time he is born till long after he is dead. Truly there was never a scheme better devised for wringing money from the unsuspecting and credulous, whether rich or poor. Therefore, in the interest of humanity, we are bound to protest against these errors as "fond things vainly invented and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God."

*ARTICLE XXII.*

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SERVICE IN THE PEOPLE'S LANGUAGE.

“It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God and the custom of the Primitive Church to have public prayer in the church or to minister the sacraments in a language not understood by the people.”



## SERVICE IN THE PEOPLE'S LANGUAGE.

THE fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians is almost wholly devoted to the subject of speaking and praying in church in the language understood by the congregation. No doubt many languages were spoken in Corinth at the time. This had led to confusion in the church service. Perhaps some professed to be inspired to speak in strange tongues; and this, as has been the case in time since, led to unseemly jargon without sense.

The apostle makes it plain that if one speaks in a tongue not understood by the audience he must interpret or have an interpreter. Clearly the essential thing is that the people be instructed, and the teaching must be in their vernacular.

There is not the most remotely plausible reason for speaking to any people on any subjects in a language they do not understand. The custom of rendering church service in a dead language probably grew out of a superstitious reverence for the language itself. Why there should be such reverence is hard to find. Both the Greek and the Latin, while they enshrine beautiful and noble literatures, which have been the delight and help of the nations, nevertheless

are loaded with as much vulgarity, licentiousness, and false religion as can be found in any of our ordinary languages. It is not the tongue, but the sense, which counts in any communion among men, and such communication is impossible except in a language mutually understood.



## ARTICLE XXIII.

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### THE SACRAMENTS.

"SACRAMENTS ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace and God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.

"There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

"Those five commonly called sacraments—that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction—are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

"The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith."



## THE SACRAMENTS.

THE sacraments are held in vastly different estimates by the different bodies of Christians. On the one extreme are those who believe in the literal presence of the body and blood of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine. They, of course, hold these elements in worshipful adoration. On the other extreme are the spiritually minded Quakers, who have no sacraments at all.

How the good Quaker satisfies his conscience in the neglect of the sacraments we do not know; but his error—for error it surely must be—is far less reprehensible than that of the other extreme. Any view of the sacraments is better than that which makes them objects of worship. The brazen serpent was at first an emblem of God's healing power among the people; but when it became an object of idolatrous worship it was destroyed. Better have no sacraments than that they should be an occasion of idolatry.

What is a sacrament? Our Article says that it is a sign of grace; that it is a visible, external sign of an inward, spiritual grace. Literally, the word means that which binds, a tie that binds a Christian to his duty, to his God, and of course to his fellows.

There is a well-known law of our language by which the suffix *ment* added to certain verbs changes the verb to a noun, and the noun thus formed stands for the completed action of the verb thus changed. Thus "achieve" becomes "achievement," the completed work of achieving; "accomplish" becomes "accomplishment," the finished work of accomplishing; and so of many verbs.

The same law applies in the formation of Latin words. *Sacro* means to give, to devote, to consecrate. Add the suffix, and we have the *sacramentum*, the oath which binds. This is the completed action of giving, devoting, or consecrating. The Romans spoke of their army as a sacramental host—a host bound, given, or consecrated to the service of the State. So the sacraments are intended to bind us to God, to duty, and to each other.

Perhaps we have no word in our language which more exactly agrees in meaning with the Latin *sacro* than our verb *to pledge*. Now, if we assume to coin a word by adding the suffix, we have *pledgement*, the finished act of the verb *to pledge*. In taking the sacraments we pledge ourselves to fidelity in the service of God.

The sacraments are, therefore, helps or aids in the Christian life. They help to keep us in the path of righteousness. Not that they have

any intrinsic effect or operation, but they are aids to faith. They help to strengthen, deepen, and confirm our faith; and this leads to more persistent, more rational, and better service—a more spiritual worship and a more useful activity among men.



## *ARTICLE XXIV.*

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### BAPTISM.

“BAPTISM is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.”





## BAPTISM.

BAPTISM is the application of water to a person as a sign of the working of the Holy Spirit in the nature of that person. Water baptism is the sign of spiritual baptism. Water as a sign of purification was used by the Jews from remote times. There is historic evidence of its use in this way for more than fifteen hundred years, from the time of Moses to the close of the New Testament canon. The usual method of applying the water was by sprinkling.

First of all, the nation as a whole was baptized and thus set apart as a separate and holy people. This took place at the crossing of the Red Sea. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. x. 1, 2.) The Psalmist tells us how this was done: "The clouds poured out water." (Ps. lxxvii. 17.) Thus the entire nation of men, women, and children were baptized in a shower of rain. They were baptized unto Moses, into the government or dispensation of Moses. As Moses was the representative of God, they were in this baptism devoted to the service of God. The Red Sea  
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was the birthplace of their freedom. Egypt was forever behind. They were henceforth a separate and independent people. In God's own way and by his agency they were now baptized into a new life.

From that time, if not from a more ancient time, water was used as an emblem of purification, and for this reason was called the water of separation. It separated the purified from the unclean. The idea of separation became so imbedded in Jewish thought that long before our Saviour's time there grew up a strong religious party known as Pharisees. The word means separated. It was derived from the Hebrew *farash*, to separate.

So important was the purification that minute directions were given for the preparation of the water to be used. These directions are found in Numbers xix. A sacrifice was burned to ashes, and the ashes were kept ready for use at all times. When some of the ashes were put into a vessel of water, thus imparting a sacrificial value to the water, the process was complete. The water thus prepared was used for purifying.

This purification was to be a statute in Israel forever. This is how the water was to be applied: "And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the per-

sons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day."

The practice here enjoined was in use when Jesus was on earth. At the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee "there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece." (John ii. 6.) Likewise in the Gospel of Mark we find reference to the same custom: "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash [*ραντίσωνται*, *ranti-sontai*, sprinkle], they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing [*βαπτισμοὺς*, *baptismous*, baptism] of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." (Mark vii. 3-5.)

I have followed Westcott and Hort's revised Greek Testament; and I doubt not it is received as the final authority by a larger number of the best and most unbiased scholars than is the case with any other Greek Testament. Here, in the same place and in reference to the same practice, the words for sprinkle and baptize are used as identical in meaning.

The case is plainly this: The Jews from remote

times used water in a religious ceremony for purification. Moses prescribed the method of preparing the water and its use. This was a statute to be perpetual in all their generations. The method of applying the water was by sprinkling. As long as they spoke the Hebrew language they used a word which means sprinkle. They also called it purifying. The words were used interchangeably.

We find in the New Testament the same use of water, still called purifying. The writers of the New Testament use the Greek tongue, and they use the word baptism to express the ancient method of sprinkling. We therefore see that, in Jewish use and thought, sprinkle and baptize meant the same thing, both as to method and religious signification.

Baptism in the New Testament meant to the Jewish mind precisely what sprinkling meant in the Old Testament. In both it was the use of water in purification. In the course of time they lost sight of the spiritual cleansing which the water was meant to typify and spoke of the application of water as the act of purifying.

Therefore, in the New Testament, baptize and purify were to the Jew the same thing. "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying." (John iii. 25.) The contention was about purifying,

and the matter was referred to John. "And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." The contention about purifying was a controversy about baptism. Clearly there was not a shade of difference in their minds between purifying and baptizing.

Therefore it is evident that, whatever various meanings the word baptize may have with profane authors, it has in the New Testament one specific meaning, and that is to purify. The words baptize, sprinkle, and purify, as used in the New Testament, mean the same thing. The performance was an everyday practice and too well understood for description. As well tell how a man washed his face or tied his shoe.

Therefore, when the disciples were commanded by the Master to go and baptize the nations, the methods of purifying must have been the conception of the duty to be performed. We cannot see how, with their Jewish training, they could have had any other thought as to the physical action to be performed. They could not but see that the command was in exact accord with their constant usage and in line with all their training in regard to purification, though extended now to all the nations.

They must have perceived also that it was a



fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus Isaiah says of the Messiah: "So shall he sprinkle many nations." (Isa. lii. 15.) I know that some would render the word *startle*, but there is really no warrant for such translation. It is an effort to discount an unpleasant witness.

This very word plays a part in New Testament history. It was this very part of Isaiah that the Ethiopian was reading as he traveled along the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza, when Philip joined him and from this very scripture preached unto him Jesus, only six verses intervening between the words quoted above and those mentioned in the Acts; and that, too, without any change in the subject. You see the passage has in it the very method by which the disciples were to incorporate the nations—by baptizing them.

Ezekiel, looking to spiritual conditions in the Messianic reign, says: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) Clean water was to be used; no more need of sacrificial ashes.

Thus in the Old and New Testaments we trace the meaning and method of baptism. It is a sacrament by which the application of water in the name of the Trinity is the outward sign of the inward spiritual grace.

*ARTICLE XXV.*

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INFANT BAPTISM.

“THE baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.”





## INFANT BAPTISM.

WE recognize the right of infants to baptism, and yet in practice we have been very lax. If it is right for the children of some Methodist homes to be baptized, then all the children of all our homes should be baptized.

What is the relation of the child to the Church? That surely must depend upon his relation to Christ. Does the child belong to Christ, or does he not? This is the question. It must be answered one way or the other. On this one question hinges the right of the child to baptism into the Church of Christ. To my mind there is but one answer. The child *does* belong to Christ.

The atonement of Christ was the redemption of the human race. If that means anything, it surely means that all the children have been redeemed by Christ, bought with his blood. Then they belong to him. He has the first right to every child born in the world. St. Paul in defining the work of the atonement tells us that by this great act of Christ the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. Surely any person of any age who has received the free gift of God unto justification of life is a proper subject of baptism. This is exactly the relation chil-

dren sustain to God; therefore they are proper subjects for baptism into his Church.

The relation which any person sustains to Christ must determine whether or not that person is a fit subject for baptism. A man professes faith in Christ; and if his conduct seems to be in accord with his profession, we baptize him in the belief that he is accepted of Christ. In this we may be mistaken; he may dissemble. But we can make no mistake of this kind in the baptism of little children. Jesus has plainly spoken on this point, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," and for the very good reason, "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

But if infants are proper subjects for baptism, why are we not plainly commanded to baptize them? Many regard this objection as a plausible one. But rightly considered it is no valid objection, but is rather favorable to belief in infant baptism, because it is just what should have been expected, and there was no occasion for any specific direction. Some things are too well understood, too much a matter of course, to be explained.

Infants had always been in the Church, and nobody in apostolic times ever thought of excluding them. Religion is innate in the human breast. The very first pair were worshipers of God, and the outward forms of worship began

with the beginning of the race. Cain and Abel offered sacrifices. Noah did the same for himself and family. Wherever Abraham pitched his tent, there he built an altar. In those times each head of the family was the priest of the family, and each family or tribe was a Church. This was the only visible form of worship known to them.

The Church had growth, like everything connected with the development of man. The race began with the family; the families combined into tribes; the tribes developed into nations. In all this the Church was developing. When the Israelites became a nation, they also became a Church. St. Stephen refers to the Church in the wilderness—that is, to the Jewish nation. There was God's visible Church on earth, with its priests, prophets, sacred books, and well-arranged services. All the men, women, and children were its members.

Into this Church Jesus was born. He was circumcised the eighth day, had offerings made in his behalf according to ecclesiastical regulations, was confirmed at the age of twelve as a son of the law, and reared strictly as a child of the Church.

Jesus organized no Church; but under the ministry of the apostles Churches were established, at first exclusively of Jewish converts, and these Churches naturally took the form of the

synagogue, and the constituency remained the same. There was a change of faith, but no change of personnel. Children were included as a matter of course.

Consequently, just as should have been expected, the apostles received converts by families. The jailer and his household were baptized at midnight in the Philippian jail. Paul at another time baptized the household of Stephanus. Lydia and her household were baptized; also the family of Cornelius and that of Crispus. These heads of families never thought of excluding their children when they came into the Christian Church. These are examples of the way in which the apostles and their associates built up the first Christian communion.

If there had been such a thing as the exclusion of infants from the Church in which they had always been recognized, that certainly would have been noted with emphasis.

The very nature and design of the Christian Church call for the baptism of infants into its membership. The aim of the Church is to include in its membership all who are in the spiritual kingdom of God. The Church should, as far as possible, use the spiritual force of God in the world. All who are God's in spiritual affinity should be his by sacramental covenant.

By parable, by simple illustration, by plain state-

ment Jesus explained the nature of the kingdom of God. The character of the kingdom was viewed from every angle. The kingdom of God is within you; it is spiritual; it is God in human nature. Among his plainest statements are those which show the relation of children to his kingdom: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." On another occasion he took a little child up in his arms, while teaching the great lessons of humility and unselfishness, and said: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Again: "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

These statements clearly show that Jesus recognized little children as subjects of the saving grace of the kingdom. Then surely, if the visible Church on earth is to be a reflex of the spiritual kingdom of God, infants certainly have a right to baptism in the name of the Trinity and recognition in the Church of God. Jesus regarded them as being more in accord with the mind of God than were the very chiefest of his apostles.

We do not baptize children with any thought that the act of baptism will work any spiritual change to make them acceptable to God; but by baptism we recognize the fact that they are



already acceptable to God. We dedicate to God the children who are already his, and we assume obligations which are already ours to train our children so as to preserve all the spiritual vitality they already have ; so that when they become personally responsible they will accept Christ by faith, and consciously experience the birth from above, and then by growth in grace through faith reach to higher and still higher attainments in spiritual life.

By the baptism of our children and the obligations thereto conjoined we aim to practice a wise spiritual conservation—a conservation of spiritual forces such as was enjoined upon parents in the earliest ages and has never been repealed. God said: “I know him [Abraham], that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” We see that the conferring of promised blessing upon Abraham hinged on his fidelity in commanding his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord.

“Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them [the principles of righteousness] when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and

when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” In this twentieth century after Christ surely we are not to have a lower standard of spiritual conservation than that enjoined in the twentieth century before his coming.





## ARTICLE XXVI.

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### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"THE Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather it is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

"Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

"The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper is faith.

"The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped."



## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Lord's Supper is a memorial sacrament. It is to remind us of the death of Christ for our sins. It is of the nature of an object lesson; the broken bread and flowing wine are intended emblematically to bring vividly to the mind the lacerated body and flowing blood of the crucified One. "This do, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

This sacrament was instituted on Thursday evening, at the close of the Paschal feast. This was the night of the betrayal. Jesus ate the Passover with the twelve, and this sacrament immediately followed. Many have tried hard to prove that Judas was not present to partake of this very solemn feast with his fellow disciples. I have failed to find any evidence that he left before the institution of the supper; therefore I conclude that he was present and received the sacred emblems by the hand of the very Christ he had already agreed to betray.

It appears from this that Jesus did not exclude Judas, though fully aware of his wickedness. Judas evidently took the Passover with the others, and it is almost as certain that he shared also in the supper. This accords with the teach-

ings of St. Paul: "Let a man so examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." Has an officiating minister a right to refuse the sacrament to any whom he may believe to be unworthy? Who is to judge of the fitness of a man to take this supper?

I once heard a very eminent preacher and theologian make the statement that only those who had been baptized should be allowed to take this supper. I have never yet found any Scriptural authority for that decision.

Our Discipline very plainly shows the attitude of mind in which we should approach the communion service. "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament to your comfort, and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees."

This points out the spirit in which we should commune and leaves each communicant to decide whether or not these conditions are complied with.

May a penitent seeking pardon partake of this sacrament? I do not recall any scripture, pro or con, on this subject; but it does seem that an

honest seeker after God might use any means of grace calculated to increase his faith.

Many very excellent people have scruples about taking this sacrament because they feel so unworthy. They stumble at the caution of St. Paul: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Read the preceding verses in regard to this matter, and you will see that the Corinthians had turned this sacrament into a bacchanalian feast. Each prepared his own provisions, and no doubt each proudly tried to excel his neighbor in the richness of his spread. When they came together each family ate their own luncheon, some to gluttony, while others drank to drunkenness, and the poor were neglected and put to shame. We may readily agree with Paul that this was eating and drinking unworthily.

But it does not apply to the humble Christian who feels unworthy. That is the way all should feel. We confess in the prayer of consecration: "We are not worthy so much as to gather the crumbs under thy table." In this lowly spirit let us examine ourselves to see that we are really sincere and spiritually honest, and in this frame of mind take the consecrated emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our Redeemer.



*ARTICLE XXVII.*

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OF BOTH KINDS.

“THE cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord’s Supper, by Christ’s ordinance and command, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.”





## OF BOTH KINDS.

THAT the laity should ever have been deprived of the right to receive both parts of the sacrament is most astounding. There is not the slightest hint of authority in the New Testament for such a deprivation. In the very institution of the supper Jesus gave the cup to the disciples, saying, "Drink ye all of it" (Πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες, *Piete ex autou pantes*, "Drink of it, all of you"). Surely we can have no better formula. To serve the wine as Christ served it is all we should desire.

It may be said that the disciples were ministers rather than laymen, but we have only to notice the practice of the apostles to see that laymen were served with both bread and wine. In 1 Corinthians xi. 21 we find Paul sharply reproving the laymen of Corinth for making such free use of the wine as to become intoxicated. They had perverted the sacrament into a bacchanalian feast. In the same epistle he says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" How can there be any communion of the wine if the priest drinks it all? The very idea of com-

munion is to have worship in common. Then notice that the very same sort of communion is expressed in regard to the bread, showing that it was the custom, both with Paul and those to whom he was writing, to take both parts of the sacrament.

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” Thus Jesus teaches that he is the great Source of spiritual life. Laymen as well as ministers have need of this divine food. We do not, of course, eat the flesh and blood of Christ; but spiritually we must all have this food in order to live.

We are not dependent upon the sacrament of bread and wine for this food, for we can by faith receive it at all times. In the sacrament we have only the emblems of this divine food. But why deny one part of these emblems to the laity? Do they not need it as much as the priest? One reason given for this denial is that the wine has become the real blood of Christ, and there is danger of the great sacrilege of spilling it by careless handling. This doctrine of transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ by priestly consecration, is too unspeakably absurd for serious thought in this twentieth century. Life is too short and the world is too busy to listen to such nonsense.

It is to be greatly regretted that a sacrament so simple and so appropriate should be perverted by superstition to such an extent as to lose its beautiful significance and be made an object of idolatrous worship. The sacramental occasion should be one of great spiritual profit to all the communicants. It is calculated to increase the faith, to warm the affections, to draw Christians closer together, to quicken every good impulse, and to strengthen all good desires.



### *ARTICLE XXVIII.*

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#### THE MARRIAGE OF MINISTERS.

“THE ministers of Christ are not commanded by God’s law either to vow the estate of single life or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.”



## THE MARRIAGE OF MINISTERS.

THE Bible does not enjoin either celibacy or the marriage state for ministers. The priests who officiated according to the Mosaic ritual married as freely as other men. If this precedent was to be set aside and a life of celibacy enjoined, that fact would have been clearly stated. Naturally we look to the teaching of Jesus on this as on other subjects. Fortunately the question was put directly to him, and his answer should forever settle this question.

Jesus was teaching the sacredness of the marriage relation and emphasizing the law that only one offense, conjugal infidelity, could possibly sever that relation: "His disciples say unto him, If the case of a man be so with his wife, it is good not to marry." The disciples were then preparing for the ministry. It was as if he had been giving instruction in a theological seminary where young men were getting equipment for the work of the ministry. Then was the time above all others to enjoin the state of single life if that had been best. He replied: "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." We learn from the next verse that, in rare in-

stances, some men may make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

Passing from the teaching of the Master to the practice of his immediate followers, we learn what construction they put on his words. Thus Paul said: "Have we not power [or liberty] to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (1 Cor. ix. 5.) The apostle is here speaking for himself and others, especially Barnabas, who chose to live and labor as he did. It was a declaration of independence, a notification to all that he intended to be free. He had the right to demand a support for his preaching or to refrain from that and live and labor in poverty. He had the right to marry like other apostles and like the brethren of the Lord and like Peter.

Thus incidentally we have a flood of light on the practice of the first ministers of the Christian Church. The apostles as a rule were married men. The brothers of the Lord were married. One of these brothers, James the Just, was for many years the Bishop of Jerusalem. He was accounted one of the holiest men on earth. No doubt he was married. Then Cephas, or Peter, the very foremost of the apostles, was a married man even at the time of his call to the ministry.



There being no Scriptural injunction on the subject, each minister is left free to determine in which relation he can be most useful. In some conditions it is undoubtedly best that a minister be not encumbered with a family. Such was the case with Bishop Asbury and his colaborers. The firm foundations of American Methodism were laid almost exclusively by bachelor preachers.

The work had to be done in the sparsely settled wilderness. Preaching or riding was an everyday business. The distances were great, the accommodations poor, roads often only a blazed path, streams unbridged, and dangers thick everywhere. In such circumstances the less encumbrance the better. The Church in the wilderness was intensely militant, and the cavalry was the main arm of the service. Only bachelors of the most consecrated type could meet the conditions.

But that was exceptional. Now that the work of the ministry is mainly to be done in the regular pastorate, in settled communities, it is no doubt best, as a general rule, that ministers marry and rear families like other men. It stands to reason that the purity and efficiency of the ministry can best be secured in this way.



*ARTICLE XXIX.*

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THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE  
CHURCHES.

“It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have always been different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men’s manners, so that nothing be ordained against God’s Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the Church and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

“Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.”



## THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCHES.

RITES and ceremonies are nonessentials in religion. This does not mean that they are not important. The ritual gives the manner of performing public religious worship; it is the prescribed way in which the functions of the Church are to be performed. Ritualism is the dress which religion wears while on public duty. A lady may be dressed very simply and yet very appropriately. So a Church service may be simple and short and yet be performed in a very impressive manner.

It is important that public worship be appropriate and reverent. Decency and order do not in any way detract from the spiritual intent and fervency of devotion.

Ritualism, like every conventionality, may easily be carried to excess. It may readily degenerate into routine and formality. We must not commit the folly of caressing the body while we permit the life, unobserved, to ebb away. Spiritual life is the great essential; without this all forms are dead. And there are times in our assemblies when emotion properly has the right of way—

when spiritual power leaps beyond all forms and expresses itself with true prophetic zeal. May these seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord come often and with greater power!

It is in the regular services of the Church and in the sacramental ceremonies, as well as in the matrimonial and burial services, that the ritual is most appropriate.

There is danger that the ritual, or more especially the order of service, may become too elaborate and require too much time. Those who love ritualism are always the people most apt to bring pressure on the General Conference to have the service improved as they perceive it, and that most frequently means some addition. This strong tendency needs to be held in check.

A prolonged ritual means a short sermon. The sermon should always be the essential part of Church service. Preaching is the divinely ordained method of saving the world. Throw forms to the winds rather than have the sermon crushed into a sermonette. The choir should never eclipse the preacher. Already the sermon is crowded by the preliminary services. There may, however, be some compensation in this. It may cause our preachers to condense and by intensive use of words crowd much into a short time.

Just how much ritual to use is a very nice

question to decide. Many of our meetings no doubt should be informal, such as our prayer meetings, revival services, and often the evening service on the Sabbath. This would give variety, check the tendency to formality, and possibly bring into active service a larger number of our members.





## ARTICLE XXX.

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### THE RULERS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

"THE President, Congress, the General Assembly, the Governors and councils of State, *as the delegates of the people*, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States and by the Constitutions of their respective States. And the said States are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction."

This Article has a footnote which is as important as the Article itself and is of equal authority. It reads as follows:

"As far as respects civil affairs, we believe it the duty of Christians, and especially of all Christian ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be; and therefore it is expected that all our preachers and people will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects."



## THE RULERS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

It is eminently proper for a Church to enjoin the allegiance of its members to the government under which they live, especially to assure all foreign governments where our people go as missionaries that our members within their jurisdiction will not in any way interfere in civil affairs.

The Church in the United States, comprehending under that term all recognized religious denominations, is entirely separate from the State. It has no civil function in its own right; but it stands for law and order, for good government and equal justice to all. It insists on good citizenship, decent living, and correct deportment in high places and low. It appeals to the deeper and more spiritual capabilities of the race and seeks to make the best elements in human nature dominant and controlling. It seeks to develop, to train, and to perfect the moral and spiritual nature in man, and thus to make him a power for good that he may stand as a beacon throwing the light of righteousness over the problems of human society.

The Church labors with the consciousness that if the individual citizen can be made pure in mo-

tive, correct in deportment, and honest in public trust, the government will be safe, and the nation will work out its true destiny. Thus the Church stands for the highest ideals, both as to the man and the nation. Of course, then, the acceptable Church member is a good citizen, a true patriot, and a promoter of all that is best in government.

The Church thus rendering loyal support to the State may in turn demand such protection by law that she will be undisturbed in her public worship, in her right of property, and in all other ways that good citizens are protected.

This, it appears to us, is the true relation of Church and State—loyalty on the one part and protection on the other. The Church cannot afford to do less than this as to duty and should not aspire to more as to privilege.

The relation of Church and State in the history of civilization is an interesting study. Of course the subject is too broad for these pages. We can only notice briefly the subject in Biblical history. In the patriarchal ages the patriarch was both magistrate and priest. He was to a great extent the government, looking after both the civil and religious interests of his family or tribe.

When the Israelites left Egypt they became a nation and also a Church. The government was dual. Moses represented the civil and Aaron the

ecclesiastical authority. After the establishment in Canaan, there was a long period without any regularly established central government. This was the time of the judges. During this time the tabernacle, the religious center, was about the only real bond of unity. Military necessities occasionally called forth a strong man who for a time united some of the tribes and thus effected more or less general coöperation. This state of things continued till Samuel. This great prophet judged Israel more extensively and more wisely than any of his predecessors. He went from one town to another judging the people and really reunited the tribes into a nation. After the establishment of the monarchy, the high priest was recognized as the authority in spiritual affairs. The kingly line was superseded by governors after the captivity, but the office of high priest continued to the end of the nationality.

The Christian Church in apostolic times developed altogether independently of the civil power. It depended wholly on voluntary contributions to carry on all of its operations. In this regard it was like the Church in America. In this country we have no semblance of a State Church, and want none. We have no public fund from which to draw support, and we want none. The promptings to liberality by an enlightened conscience furnish all the funds necessary to

carry on the regular work of the Church and to accomplish any other work which may be approved by the Church constituency.

The great benefit of this condition is that the membership of the Church must be enlightened so as to have a comprehensive grasp of all our plans and have a consecrated coöperation in all our work. The enlightening of the membership so as to accomplish any great work is of more value than the work itself.

The promoters of the apostolic Church were very emphatic in teaching obedience to the civil authority. In this they had the example of Jesus. When he healed lepers he commanded them to show themselves to the priests and to make such satisfaction as the law required. He paid taxes, even though he questioned the right of the collector to exact them.

“Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation.” (Rom. xiii. 1, 2.) Paul, having left Titus in Crete to put the Churches of the island in order, afterwards wrote to him giving specific instructions about what to do and to teach. And here is what he told him to teach in regard to civil authority: “Put them in mind to

be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, and be ready to every good work." (Titus iii. 1.)

St. Paul evidently had a high estimate of the value of law and order. The Roman government, while the best the age could give, was far from being complete in the protection of its citizens. Paul himself suffered much because of inadequate protection. This will help us the more to appreciate his earnest plea for obedience on the part of Christians. As Christians we should try to promote good government, to have bad or inefficient laws substituted by better ones, not by revolutionary agitation, but by peaceable and orderly methods.





*ARTICLE XXXI.*

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A CHRISTIAN MAN'S GOODS.

"THE riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor of his ability."



## A CHRISTIAN MAN'S GOODS.

THERE is no communism nor extreme socialism taught in the Bible. The only social movement which had the appearance of such a state was that which prevailed in the first Christian Church in Jerusalem. People were thrilled with the new doctrine of the almost inconceivable love of God, who had redeemed the world by the awful death of his Son on the Roman cross. Faith had at once reached high flood tide. As a result a mighty wave of benevolence swept the minds of vast multitudes, so that many were willing to pour out their gifts in great profusion.

There was a great need back of this tide of benevolence. It was called forth by the unusually large number of the poor in this first Christian Church. Jerusalem, like every holy city, was thronged with the poor. Like all such cities, it was burdened with the poor, the sick, the blind, the halt, and the lame who had gathered there to die. As a compensation many of the rich came for the same purpose. Among others of this class, Joseph of Arimathea had come and had prepared himself a tomb. That tomb was hallowed above all others, for there the body of Jesus lay. These poor people would nat-

urally be among the very first to be attracted by the great religious movement in the city at that time. Most probably the miracles wrought by the hands of the apostles were among this very class. We may well believe that the manifestation of such power, coupled with such glorious hope and living experience as were proclaimed by the inspired apostles, would sweep them into the Christian fold almost in mass.

The apostles and their helpers, we may well feel assured, were overwhelmed by the stupendous task of taking care of such multitudes. Here was the great need for extraordinary liberality. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that this condition called forth an immediate response of a most generous character. Those who had money gave without stint. Many who had extra lands or houses sold them and gave the proceeds.

All this created unusual conditions. The poor must have felt that a new year of jubilee had come. Thus we read: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own. But they had all things common." The most that this language implies is that many who had possessions in money and land held these things subject to the needs of the poor. They were willing to contribute to any needed expense.

But all this liberality was entirely voluntary. There was no demand that any should give. It was Christian benevolence, not communism. There was no general surrender of property to a common fund. Had there been, there would have been no occasion for special mention. The giving of land and houses was the exception and not the rule.

The case of Ananias and Sapphira throws light on these transactions. These two people, husband and wife, had agreed to sell a possession and give a part of the price while pretending to give the whole. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts v. 3, 4.) Thus we see there was no compulsion whatever.

Still another incident sheds light on this subject. The first jar in the primitive Church was over this very work of supplying the poor. "There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." (Acts vi. 1.) We clearly see from this that the poor were fed separately or received their portion to themselves. The well-to-do did not share in the distribution. The Grecians (Jews speaking the

Greek language) had a suspicion that their poor were neglected. This led to the appointment of deacons to look after this very work.

Many years later Paul visited the city and had a conference with James, Peter, and John. They consented for him to go to the Gentiles, while they labored with the circumcised. Paul gives their parting admonition: "Only that we should remember the poor, the same which also I was forward to do." So Paul in his missionary journeys was persistent in taking collections for the poor saints at Jerusalem. No doubt the other apostles did the same in their missionary tours. Thus for a generation the poor saints at Jerusalem were objects of solicitude not only in the city, but also with those whose activities extended in many directions. This apparent communism was, therefore, really an organized charity to care for the poor.

Jesus is our best Teacher in regard to our social relations. "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise." This is the true standard of sociological responsibility. It is the true standard of justice, equity, and liberality. Conduct based on this principle will be acceptable to God and satisfactory to our own sense of obligation.

This is a self-evident law of righteousness, self-evident to each man because it makes each

man's estimate of himself the standard of obligation. It accomplishes the apparent impossibility of making a wise selfishness the law of intelligent liberality. Your obligation to any man under any circumstances can at once be determined if you consider what you would desire of that man for yourself if you were in his place, and he in yours. This is the golden rule. It will fit every possible condition.

This is the safe and sane rule to apply in the exercise of liberality. It teaches every man what he should do in every case. With what tenacity may a Christian hold his goods? In the primitive Church in Jerusalem the believers were of one heart and one soul. "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." Those who had goods still held them in possession unless they chose to sell them for the public good. Their goods were held subject to the necessity of the poor.

This seems to suggest the true idea of liberality: to hold our possessions subject to what we believe to be the will of God concerning them. That is just what these people at Jerusalem did. They fully believed in the presence of the Holy Spirit to speak by the mouth of the apostles, and they held their possessions subject to the divine call. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This is the correct attitude of mind toward every



responsibility and, of course, toward this question of giving.

In this way we give according to the suggestions of an enlightened conscience. No one should be expected to give on any other basis. This is equivalent to taking God into our business, to live, to labor, and to give as he directs. To give properly requires wise discrimination; to give much requires the money-making faculty.

The old Jewish law required a tenth for the Lord. That was a legal charity befitting a legal age. To give one-tenth was a great hardship on some, and no burden whatever on others. As an example or precedent, it is still of use. But the more plastic rule which Jesus gave bends to fit each separate case. It calls for investigation, for discrimination, and for intelligent distribution. It is the golden rule which satisfies a sanctified intellect and divinely quickened conscience. Let this be graven deeply in every soul: "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise."



*ARTICLE XXXII.*

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A CHRISTIAN MAN'S OATH.

“As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle, so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requires it, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.”



## A CHRISTIAN MAN'S OATH.

THE words of Jesus here referred to are a part of the Sermon on the Mount. "It was said to them of old, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." This refers to the custom of making vows, especially under the influence of excitement and passion. That such custom was liable to many abuses is at once apparent.

Jephthah's vow was of this character. In the peril of war he was thrilled with a sense of God's power to give him victory. Under that excitement he made the vow that if God would give him the victory, then on his return home whatsoever first met him should be devoted to God. His daughter, his well-beloved and only child, was the first to come forth with joyous greetings. According to the prevailing ideas of the time, he felt bound by his vow, or sacred oath, to devote that daughter to God, probably not in burnt sacrifice, but to perpetual virginity. Even in that early age the false idea prevailed that one could be more devoted to God in single than in married life.

Another instance of this pernicious practice of imposing on one's self a rash vow or oath is that

of Herod, who was by this means trapped into the murder of John the Baptist.

Something like this survives in our own time. A man in a great rage swears that he will kill his fellow man on sight and then feels bound by his oath and his love of consistency to carry out the threat. The abnormal state of mind produced by great excitement, especially when one is dominated by anger, is not the proper one in which to make resolutions for future guidance.

It appears from the Word of the Great Teacher that in his day men even in ordinary conversation were in the habit of swearing by heaven, by the earth, by Jerusalem, and also by their own heads. This practice, which took the old law for an excuse, seems to be what Jesus condemned. It does not appear that he had any reference to judicial proceedings in court. "Let your communications [your ordinary talks one with another] be yea, yea, or nay, nay." The passage in the Epistle of James is simply an echo of the Sermon on the Mount and has, of course, the same meaning. James was the Lord's brother, and his epistle shows that he had imbibed deeply of his Brother's sentiments.

Profane swearing is a most disgusting and senseless habit. It is the one crime without a motive. Nothing can be gained by it; no good reason can be given for its use. It is humorously

said of John Brooks, who used to preach extensively in this country, that he illustrated the folly of profane swearing by representing the devil as going a-fishing and using various kinds of bait to catch the different kinds of men. For the lustful he baited with beauty, for the thieves with goods, for the murderers with hate, a motive for each crime; but for the profane swearer he used no bait, but simply threw out the hook, chuckling to himself: "That fool bites at the naked hook."

In this connection we may, of course, insist on the sanctity of an oath. Under no circumstances should a man forswear himself. Perjury is a crime, and a man by false swearing becomes a criminal. But it is a great condescension to human weakness that an oath should be necessary to obtain the truth in any case. A man's word should be as good as his oath. A man should have that cast of character that makes his word so certain that no oath could make it more trustworthy.



*ARTICLE XXXIII.*

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THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

“THERE will be at the end of the world a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.”





## THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

THIS doctrine is plainly taught in the Scriptures. Jesus, the highest Authority, most clearly proclaimed it: "The hour cometh, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of condemnation." (John v. 28, 29.) "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 40.)

St. Paul regarded this doctrine as so fundamental that, in his view, without it there could be no real Christianity: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Cor. xv. 12-14.) Thus clearly St. Paul rests the whole system of Christianity on the certainty of the general resurrection: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the

twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) The dead are to be raised incorruptible—that is, not subject to decay or to death—and those who are living at the time shall be changed into the same incorruptible nature.

The mystery of this doctrine has led to many widely different theories. Many reject any real resurrection. With them the whole subject is to be construed in some spiritual sense. That human bodies soon after death are decomposed and go back to the original elements of which all matter is composed is a fact recognized by all intelligent people. When the process is complete, the elements that were in any human body are not by any means distinguishable from other elements of the same kind. The carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, iron, and all other constituents are just the same as these elements wherever found. In turn they may have been vitalized in hundreds of successive human bodies.

Not only so, but the man who lives to old age has worn out and cast away about a dozen successive bodies. His body has been changing continuously every hour of his life, throwing off effete matter and taking in a new supply. The identity of particles was never for a moment necessary to the insurance of personal identity.

When a person first wakes to full consciousness of life, he is but a few years old. When he reaches twenty, he is conscious that he is the same person who was before only a small boy. But certainly he did not then have the same body he has now, for he is now three times as heavy. Through all changes personal identity remains the same. A man may be greatly emaciated by sickness and then again become robust; but memory, reason, and consciousness assure him that he is the same person.

Now, since man may wear out many bodies and at last contribute a very thin one to the grave, what body will he have in the resurrection? This very question was a live one in St. Paul's time: "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" The question shows plainly that the men who lived then were as much alive to the difficulties in the case as we are to-day. St. Paul comprehended clearly the whole case as presented in the question. Fortunately we have his answer. It seems to me passing strange that so little attention has been given to this answer by writers and speakers on this subject.

"Simpleton, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." (1 Cor. xv. 35.) The seed cannot have a future life without dying. So Jesus said, referring to himself: "Except a

corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) The real life cannot be had till after death. The grain of wheat in the ground dies and lives at the same time. That is what the Christian does. When the body dies, the soul takes on higher life. This is true also of the body, only there is an indeterminate lapse of time between its death and its living again.

"Thou sowest not that body which shall be." Thus the very first statement of St. Paul is that you do not sow the body that shall be. Does this really mean that the body buried is not the one raised? Or is it the spiritual splendor and final adaptation to the higher mode of living which makes it different? See what Paul teaches, "But bare grain," naked grain (*γυμνὸν κόκκον*). You sow the naked grain, but you do not see the naked grain springing from the ground. You see the living blade, then a stalk, then other stalks growing out from this central one, forming a cluster with numerous blades, and finally the heads or ears of wheat, a hundredfold more than the simple grain sown.

The development of this cluster of ripened wheat from the single grain is the figure, the parable which illustrates the resurrection. It is the direct answer by an inspired writer to the twofold question: "How are the dead raised up?

and with what body do they come?" Surely, if we would learn about the resurrection, this is the passage to study.

Then, "How are the dead raised up?" Every one is ready to answer: "By the power of God." Certainly, and also in a manner similar to the way wheat grows from the grain; otherwise this parable would be without meaning. The wheat grows by the force of nature, another name for the power of God, for "all power is of God." Power from the same great Source must effect the resurrection.

The wheat plant grows from the wheat grain because the grain has in it a germ of life; it is vital; otherwise it would simply rot in the ground. There is no break in the life; this insures the future growth. So also with the man. The real man never dies; only the body dies. The soul is vital. No parable can fit every point, and here is where the points of this parable vary. There is, nevertheless, a real comparison. It is in the continuity of life in each case. The wheat grain carries its life into the ground. The human spirit carries its life up to God, who gave it. There is no break in the human life; this insures the resurrection. The grain of wheat can live in another form, have a future life, because it is alive. So the man has a future life simply because he does not die. The wheat assimilates to

itself, into its own nature, the materials which, through the mysteries of growth, form the body which it needs for the perpetuity of its kind. Just so the spirit, the soul, at the proper time may assimilate to itself, into its own nature, the materials, earthly materials, such as now compose our bodies, digesting them to the exact nature and consistency necessary for the spiritual body which it needs for eternal service.

The objection no doubt will be made that material things cannot by any kind of growth or assimilation become spiritual. But does not the soul of man, though wholly spiritual, have growth? Is the soul of an infant fully grown? If not, it must have growth. Where do the materials of its growth come from? The soul, you say, is from God. Certainly. So is everything else. But God makes nothing of full stature at the initiative. The principle of growth, development, or evolution runs through all the processes of nature. God breathed into man originally the breath of life, and man became a living soul. That was for the race. Through natural generation the germ of a living soul has been transmitted to each human being. That is the way souls begin. But evidently souls have growth. The only materials of growth known to us consist of food and drink. The Power which is producing souls constantly before our very eyes in the midst of



temporal environments may reasonably be expected by a similar process and out of like materials to produce our final spiritual body at the proper time.

The resurrection, then, does not seem so abstract and mysterious when we come to think of it as similar to that we have witnessed during all our sojourn in the world. The life within us has built the bodies we have and has kept them in repair. We see no reason why that life may not build the final body by a similar process and out of like materials.

Of course it is also true that with the lower animals the life, or the spirit in the animal, builds the body. Man is one with the animals in physical structure; but he is more: he belongs to a superior order. "God breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul." This places man in a class by himself. He was an animal complete in every animal structure before he became a man. There is no reason to suppose that he was a dead animal before God breathed into him the living soul. The soul was additional to the animal nature. This made him like God, a son of God. Man thus reached the level where he became a partaker of the divine nature. This is why he is immortal and the brutes are not. "The spirit of man goeth upward to God, who

gave it; the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth." (Eccles. iii. 21, xii. 7.)

"But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him." The ordinary processes of nature are pleasing to God. The body thus formed is the one that it has pleased him to give: "And to every seed its own body." It matters not where the elements come from or in what bodies they may have been animate, when they pass through the laboratory of the wheat plant they become wheat. So with the human body. The food we take may have been swine, cow, wheat, squash, or pumpkin; but when by assimilation it becomes a part of us, then it is our flesh, very dear to us, to be nourished and preserved with special care. The identity of the particles, whether from this food or that, has no effect on our personal identity, that which constitutes the sameness we call self. As the elements of combustion enter the candle flame and are consumed or changed into another form and thrown off, while the flame remains; so the elements of nutrition which enter our vital structure are consumed, used up, or changed in form and thrown off, while the self remains the same.

This may become clearer if we reflect that the bunch of wheat when ready for the harvest does not in all probability retain the least part of the original grain. The seed grain had but little



substance, and that little was given to the infant plant in the first stages of growth. Then the plant sent out its tiny roots and began to gather substance from the soil. The life in the plant builds its own body. Examine the full-grown plant. All its substance has been gathered from the soil and the atmosphere. The small substance of the seed grain was used and thrown off at the very beginning. The full-grown stalk is the body raised. The seed grain was the body buried or planted. It is a matter of utter indifference whether the new body has or has not any of the elements of the old.

Therefore we conclude that the soul has all the vital energy and proper functions necessary to assimilate its own body when God's appointed time for the work shall come, and that it is a matter of no consequence whether the elements which shall enter into the new body were or were not connected with the old body which it had used and which it had cast aside as a worn garment no longer needed. That there will be some recognizable continuity of form between the old and the new is an evident implication of Scripture, as the new wheat after the processes are completed is similar to the grain which formerly decayed in the ground.

But, after all, we need not be concerned as to how this great work is to be wrought. God has

said that it shall be done; that is enough. This reasoning, whether sound or unsound, is not necessary to our belief in the resurrection. We may take refuge in the warm faith of the great apostle. Hear him: "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

As Jesus rose from the grave with the same body which had been crucified, some may think that this should be taken as a pattern of all bodies in the general resurrection and that we are to expect a similar resurrection of our entombed bodies. But the conditions are widely different, and may call for very different processes. It appears that Jesus came from the grave with actual flesh, blood, and bones, just as he had lived. The wounds were in his hands, feet, and side. These were shown to his disciples as indubitable proof of his identity. He bade them examine him, saying: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." True, he appeared in their midst while the doors were shut, but this was rather a proof of his divine power. He might have done the same thing before his death. We must take his own positive statement that he had flesh and

bones. His resurrection seems to have been similar to that of Lazarus and the others whom he raised—a resurrection back to corporeal existence. That is not the kind of body we shall need, as it would not be suitable to our place of residence. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

In his ascension to heaven or some time prior to this Jesus must have experienced a change similar to that granted to Enoch and Elijah when they were translated. It was foretold in prophecy that his body was not to see corruption after death. In this he was an exception to the general law. Our bodies are not to be fashioned like his body as it came from the grave, with its scars, with its flesh and bones, its appetite for food, indicating mortal conditions, but like unto his glorious body as it now appears ascended forever.



*ARTICLE XXXIV.*

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THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

"THERE will be a general judgment at the end of this world, and all who have lived on the earth shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and every one shall be rewarded according to what he has done in this life, whether it be good or bad."



## THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

“God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.” (Acts xvii. 31.) “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be bad.” (Eccles. xii. 14.) “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (Rom. v. 10.) “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.” (Matt. xxv. 31, 32.) “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” (Matt. xii. 36.) “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment.” (Heb. ix. 27.)

These scriptures, and many like passages which might be quoted, teach beyond a doubt the certainty of a future general judgment. All the cavil, objection, and adverse criticism have failed to obscure the plain meaning of inspiration in

regard to this subject. This is the great assize, the final day of accounts, in which the moral actions of all the people of this earth shall be judged and rewarded by the perfect standard of right. This is most clearly taught in the Book. It is not for us to sit in judgment as to the necessity or propriety of the things God has revealed, but in the attitude of disciples let us endeavor to get a clear comprehension of that which is revealed. In such an attitude we may see the great propriety of a last great day of judgment. It comes from two sources—justice to man and justification to God.

1. As to man. When we leave this world we carry our destiny with us. Character carries destiny. Whether we go to our final home or to an intermediate state, in either case we are saved or lost. Then the objection is made, Why a final day of judgment? We may not be able to see all the reasons why, but some very readily appear. Man has lived his life openly before the world; it is according to all propriety that his actions should pass in review in a like public manner.

Then man's work for good or evil does not cease with his life. It is not till all influences have worked out their final results that a man can be rewarded according to what he has done or failed to do. And while it is true that man after death follows the trend of his character



as he did also before death and goes to his own place, it is according to the principles of wisdom and justice that the final reward should come at the end of the earth's career. Then every action, every influence, every motive will stand out in its own true light. Every human being will then see clearly the justice of his destiny.

2. As to God. This world is to a very marked degree a world of sin, pain, and sorrow. The wisdom and goodness of God have often in consequence been severely questioned. Many have thought that a just God should not be the author of such a world. That men have made themselves sinners, and thus become the authors of their worst miseries, has been pointed out. Nevertheless, a God of infinite wisdom could have made it otherwise. And surely the God who sees the end from the beginning has not been taken by surprise, so as to have on his hands a world worse than he expected. The only legitimate conclusion is that God made the world with full knowledge of what it would be and with ample resources to have made it of some other kind.

Now, it is conceivable that the great Father of all would desire to make his intelligent children see that all things have been made as they are for a wise and worthy purpose. Therefore it is according to wisdom that there should be a great day of accounts in which it will be shown that

every man has received the exact and proper results of every day and every hour of his conscious life—that the Judge of all the earth has done right.

But the question comes back, Why did God make a world in which it is not only possible but extremely easy to sin and thus bring on his children the sure results of misery and anguish? Let us consider: Can there be real virtue without volition or the power of choice? and is not sin always possible to all who have volition? But surely volition might have been given in conditions where sin would not be so enticing. All experience shows that for human beings sin has always been crouching at the door. Sin is the easiest as well as the most disastrous of all misfortunes. To live and sin not is an ideal condition rarely, if ever, attained by any inhabitants of earth. We have to fight temptation from the cradle to the grave.

From all indications we have from revelation it appears that God has a supreme interest in our race. The scheme of redemption assuredly puts the destiny of the human race in the forefront of the chief designs of the Great Eternal. Looking at things from this exalted viewpoint, we may be able to see why we have been placed in conditions where sin is so easy and so enticing. As there can be no virtue, no strong character with-

out temptation and freedom to sin, we see at once that the virtue will be valuable, the character strong and finished, in proportion to the force of the temptation resisted.

Life is planned upon a scale calculated to produce character of the most transcendent worth. The man who comes up from the base line of temptation and, despite the allurements and almost compelling enticements to sin, to say nothing of the pressure, sometimes to the point of starvation, or the test of martyrdom for the truth, and still maintains his integrity, reaches the highest moral level attainable by created intelligences. Is it not reasonable that God should want such resplendent beings for his service in the eternal years to come? How else could they be produced? The mighty hosts which no man could number, who shall come out of great tribulation and wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, will serve forever in character which could not have been produced in any other way.

If it is true that God in the creation and preservation of the human race is working to produce the best quality of man, the supreme excellence of soul, and this quality is attainable only in the severe pressure of responsibility, then we can see that the crucible of life is well suited to the purpose intended. This is why the base line of responsibility is so near the limit of human

strength. Men are not tempted beyond what they are able to bear, but very often tempted to the limit of ability. In the travail of the soul the supreme excellence of soul, the final touch of character, is produced. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.) "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

Therefore it appears that the world as it is, for the purpose intended, is the very best that could have been devised even by the God of infinite wisdom and perfect goodness. "All evil in possibility is the awful price which had to be paid for any personal sainthood."

The life of Moses is a fine illustration of how a human soul under divine guidance can reach the highest excellence. The first third of his life was given to education, to the enlargement of mind, the polish of attainment; the second third, to pastoral work and meditation (this was the ripening period of mental and moral qualities); the last third, to the test of severe leadership. Such a life turned out the highest type of manhood. If only one of a million of all those whose aspirations are the best can reach this high level, the race does not exist in vain. Viewed

from one angle, it might seem that a million failures had gone to the making of one supreme success. But the million were failures only by comparison. It may be that a million failures attended the final production of the Albemarle pippin, but the million failures were good apples and supplied a large place in the world's comfort. So the man who in high endeavor falls below the best rank has, nevertheless, reached a very superior rank and has abundant reason to be thankful. The man who makes no high endeavor must face the responsibility of being disobedient to the noblest possibilities within him.

Foremost in the discussion on human existence and divine government, where the justice of God and the responsibility of man are concerned, is the great essential fact of redemption. Redeeming love follows man into every nook and corner of the world. It smiles on every proper and lawful enterprise, makes joyous all the labor and toil of conscientious workers. But its frown is on every evil work; the accusing conscience gives unrest in every sinful employment. Emanating from the great Father of all, it has an answering station in the conscience of every man. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This proclaims the great moral law of gravitation. It is felt in every breast. All men feel the drawing, and it is only by their re-

sistance that they are kept from God and heaven. The still small voice which speaks in every conscience may be unheeded while sin runs riot, but it fails not as occasion permits to make itself heard. It speaks, however feebly and unheeded, in the brothel, in the dive, in the gamblers' club, in the scenes of riot and strife. Even in heathen lands it is the voice of the unknown God, intimating a hope as yet unfound. This great truth of redeeming love, with witness in every breast, will stand out in the last day above all else in "justifying the ways of God to man."

Now, if the great final judgment shall fix forever in the mind of every intelligent being that God in dealing with men has not been less than himself, then such declarative judgment is in accord with the eternal fitness of things.





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